Linux split command

Updated: 05/04/2019 by Computer Hope

On Unix-like operating systems, the **split** command splits a file into pieces.

This page covers the GNU/Linux version of **split**.

Description

split outputs fixed-size pieces of input *INPUT* to files named *PREFIX***aa**, *PREFIX***ab**, ...

The default size for each split file is 1000 lines, and default PREFIX is "**x**". With no INPUT, or when INPUT is a dash ("**-**"), read from standard input.

Syntax

```
split [OPTION]... [INPUT [PREFIX]]
```

Options

-a *N*, **--suffix-length=***N*	Use suffixes of length *N* (default **2**)
-b *SIZE*, **--bytes=***SIZE*	Write *SIZE* bytes per output file.
-C *SIZE*, **--line-bytes=***SIZE*	Write at most *SIZE* bytes of lines per output file.
-d, **--numeric-suffixes**	Use numeric suffixes instead of alphabetic.
-e, **--elide-empty-files**	Do not generate empty output files with "**-n**"
--filter=*COMMAND*	Write to shell command *COMMAND*; file name is **$FILE**
-l *NUMBER*, **--lines=***NUMBER*	Put *NUMBER* lines per output file.
-n *CHUNKS*, **--number=***CHUNKS*	Generate *CHUNKS* output files. (See below.)
-u, **--unbuffered**	Immediately copy input to output with "**-n r/...**".
--verbose	Print a verbose diagnostic before each output file is opened.
--help	Display a help message and exit.
--version	Output version information and exit.

SIZE may be one of the following, or an integer optionally followed by one of following multipliers:

suffix	multiplier
KB	**1000**
K	**1024**
MB	**1000** x **1000**
M	**1024** x **1024**

...and so on for **G** (gigabytes), **T** (terabytes), **P** (petabytes), **E** (exabytes), **Z** (zettabytes), **Y** (yottabytes).

CHUNKS may be:

- *N*: split into *N* files based on size of input
- *K*/*N*: output *K*th of *N* to standard output
- *l*/*N*: split into *N* files without splitting lines
- *l*/*K*/*N*: output *K*th of *N* to standard output without splitting lines
- *r*/*N*: like "**l**" but use round robin distribution *r*/*K*/*N* likewise but only output *K*th of *N* to standard output

Examples

```
split -b 22 newfile.txt new
```

Split the file **newfile.txt** into three separate files called **newaa**, **newab** and **newac**..., with each file containing 22 bytes of data.

```
split -l 300 file.txt new
```

Split the file **newfile.txt** into files beginning with the name **new**, each containing 300 lines of text.

Related commands

csplit – Split files based on a defined context.