Shell Script: Conditionals

This reading will get you sufficiently familiar with bash *conditionals* for the final project. Conditionals are ways of telling a script to do something *under specific condition(s).* In this reading, you will learn about shell script conditionals using `if` `else`.

If

Syntax:

```
if [ condition ]
then
    statement
fi
```

You must always put spaces around your conditions in the `[` `]`. Every `if` condition block must be paired with a `fi`.

Example

```
$ cat if_example.sh
a=1
b=2
if [ $a -lt $b ]
then
    echo "a is less than b"
fi
$ sh if_example.sh  # sh tells the terminal to run the script if_example.sh using the default shell
a is less than b
```

If-Else

Syntax:

```
if [ condition ]
then
    statement_1
else
    statement_2
fi
```

You don’ t use `then` *for* `else` *cases.*

Example

```
 cat if_else_example.sh
a=3
b=2
if [ $a -lt $b ]
then
    echo "a is less than b"
else
    echo "a is greater than or equal to b"
fi
$ sh if_else_example.sh
a is greater than or equal to b
```

Elif

The statement `elif` means “else if” :

Syntax:

```
if [ condition_1 ]
then
    statement_1
elif [ condition_2 ]
then
    statement_2
fi
```

Example

```
$ cat elif_example.sh
a=2
b=2
if [ $a -lt $b ]
then
    echo "a is less than b"
elif [ $a == $b ]
then
    echo "a is equal to b"
else # Here a is not <= b, so a > b
    echo "a is greater than b"
fi
$ sh elif_example.sh
a is equal to b
```

Nested Ifs

As in other prgramming languages, it’ s also possible to nest if-statements.

Syntax:

```
if [ condition_1 ]
then
    statement_1
elif [ condition_2 ]
    statement_2
    if [ condition_2.1 ]
    then
        statement_2.1
    fi
else
    statement_3
fi
```

Example

```
$ cat nested_ifs_example.sh
a=3
b=3
c=3
if [ $a == $b ]
then
    if [ $a == $c ]
    then
        if [ $b == $c ]
        then
            echo "a, b, and c are equal"
        fi
    fi
else
    echo "the three variables are not equal"
fi

$ sh nested_ifs_example.sh
a, b, and c are equal
```

Alternatively, this example could have been simplified to a single if-statement:

```
a=3
b=3
c=3
if [ $a == $b ] && [ $a == $c ] && [ $b == $c ]
then
    echo "a, b, and c are equal"
else
    echo "the three variables are not equal"
fi
```

`&&` *means “and”*

Bonus: “test”

Sometimes, instead of using brackets around conditions, you’ ll see the `test` command in use:

Example

```
$ cat test_example.sh
a=1
b=2
if test $a -lt $b
then
    echo "a is less than b"
fi

$ sh test_example.sh
a is less than b
```

`test` and `[` `]` are the same command. We encourage using `[` `]` instead as it’ s more readable.