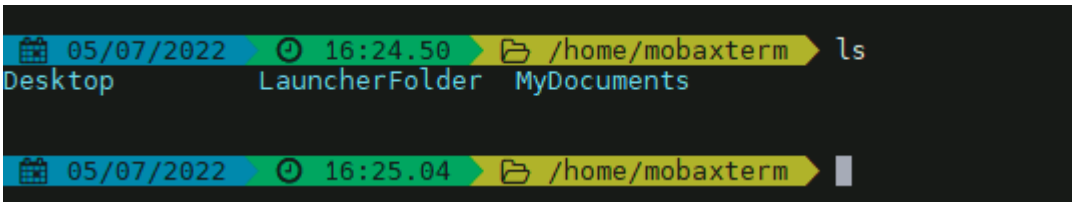
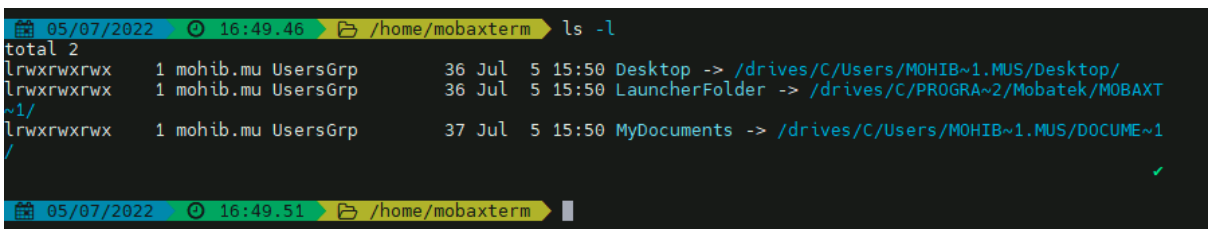
Basic tutorial for navigating terminal.

How to see what's in a folder

When you first get to the command line, you're in your home folder. While you're there—or when you're in any folder (*directory* in Unix-speak)—you might want to know what's in it. To do that you use the `ls` (or *list*) command. Type `ls` and press the Return key, and you'll see the folders (and/or files) in the current directory.



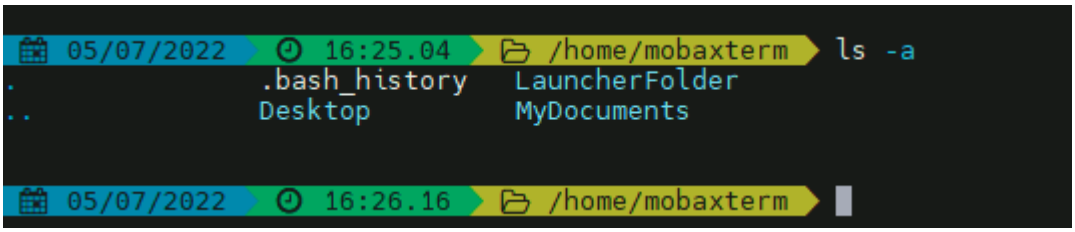
The output of the plain `ls` command is pretty sparse; it shows you the names of files and folders contained in the current directory (including some familiar ones such as Desktop, MyDocuments and so on). Fortunately, you can add a number of optional *switches* to the `ls` command that allow you to see more information. For example, type `ls -l` (that's a lower-case L), then press Return. You'll see something like this:



Don't worry too much about what all that means right now—we're just getting our feet wet. The point is that `ls` can provide additional information about files and

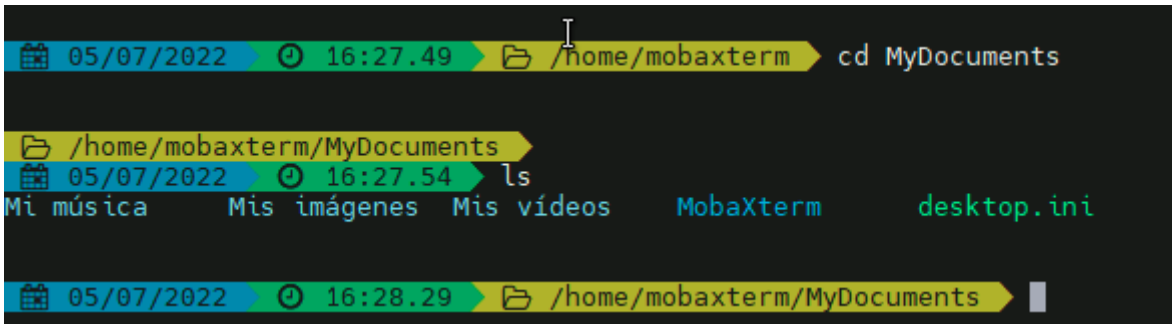
folders, depending on the options you specify.

One other handy option: You can view *invisible* files—ones that the Explorer doesn't normally show you—by typing `ls -a`. (These hidden files all have dots (.) in front of their names.)



How to access other folders/directories

When you're in the explorer and you want to move to another folder, you find that folder and double-click it. From the command line, you use the `cd` (or *change directory*) command instead. So let's say you're in your Home folder and want to peek inside the MyDocuments folder. To do that, you'd type `cd MyDocuments`. (Remember to always type a space after any command that has an additional argument, such as the name of a directory in the previous example.) Once you've done that, `ls` will show you the contents of your MyDocuments folder.



- If you type `cd` and press the Return key—with no directory specified—you'll go back to your Home folder. (You can also type `cd ~` to go there.)
- If you type `cd /`, you'll go to the root level of your startup disk.
- If you type `cd ..` (that's two periods), you'll go to the directory above the one you're currently in. So if you're in your home folder type `cd ~`, and type `cd ..`,

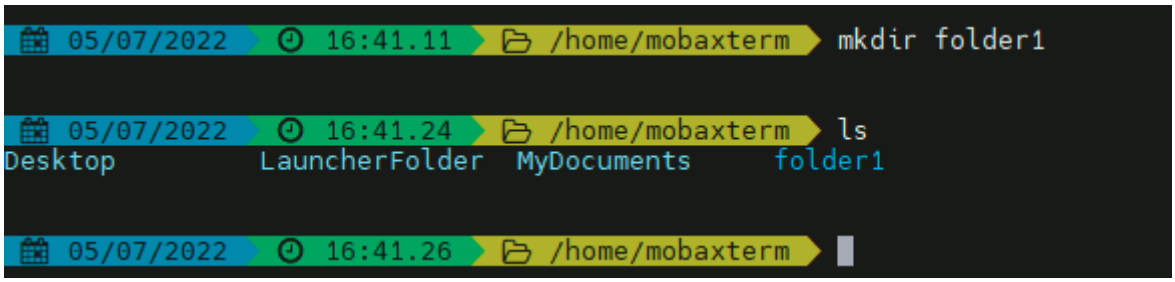
you'll go one folder up.

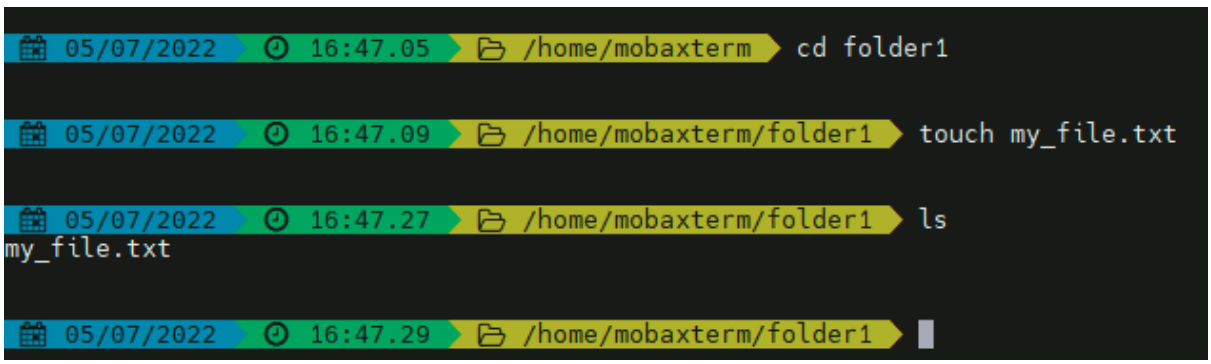
- And if you type `cd -` (hyphen) you'll go back to the directory you were in before the last time you issued the `cd` command.

Creating a new Folder/directory

lets say we are in our home folder type `cd ~` and we want to create a new folder/directory called folder1 we type `mkdir folder1` this creates a new folder/directory in the home directory called folder1

if we type `ls` we see that indeed there a new directory called folder1



Creating an empty file

Let's go inside the folder we just created by typing `cd folder1` and create an empty text file called my_file.txt. For this we type `touch my_file.txt` This creates a new file called my_file.txt in the folder named folder1 and by typing `ls` we can confirm that the file exists