

**NAME**

**perror** – print a system error message

**SYNOPSIS**

```
#include <stdio.h>
```

```
void perror(const char *s);
```

```
#include <errno.h>
```

```
const char * const sys_errlist[];
```

```
int sys_nerr;
```

```
int errno; /* Not really declared this way; see errno(3) */
```

Feature Test Macro Requirements for glibc (see **feature\_test\_macros(7)**):

*sys\_errlist, sys\_nerr:*

Since glibc 2.19:

`_DEFAULT_SOURCE`

Glibc 2.19 and earlier:

`_BSD_SOURCE`

**DESCRIPTION**

The **perror()** function produces a message on standard error describing the last error encountered during a call to a system or library function.

First (if *s* is not NULL and *\*s* is not a null byte ('\0')), the argument string *s* is printed, followed by a colon and a blank. Then an error message corresponding to the current value of *errno* and a new-line.

To be of most use, the argument string should include the name of the function that incurred the error.

The global error list *sys\_errlist*[], which can be indexed by *errno*, can be used to obtain the error message without the newline. The largest message number provided in the table is *sys\_nerr*−1. Be careful when directly accessing this list, because new error values may not have been added to *sys\_errlist*[],. The use of *sys\_errlist*[] is nowadays deprecated; use **strerror(3)** instead.

When a system call fails, it usually returns −1 and sets the variable *errno* to a value describing what went wrong. (These values can be found in *<errno.h>*.) Many library functions do likewise. The function **perror()** serves to translate this error code into human-readable form. Note that *errno* is undefined after a successful system call or library function call: this call may well change this variable, even though it succeeds, for example because it internally used some other library function that failed. Thus, if a failing call is not immediately followed by a call to **perror()**, the value of *errno* should be saved.

**ATTRIBUTES**

For an explanation of the terms used in this section, see **attributes(7)**.

Interface	Attribute	Value
<b>perror()</b>	Thread safety	MT-Safe race:stderr

**CONFORMING TO**

**perror()**, *errno*: POSIX.1-2001, POSIX.1-2008, C89, C99, 4.3BSD.

The externals *sys\_nerr* and *sys\_errlist* derive from BSD, but are not specified in POSIX.1.

**NOTES**

The externals *sys\_nerr* and *sys\_errlist* are defined by glibc, but in *<stdio.h>*.

**SEE ALSO**

**err(3)**, **errno(3)**, **error(3)**, **strerror(3)**

**COLOPHON**

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<https://www.kernel.org/doc/man-pages/>.