

Head Command Examples

The head command in unix or linux system is used to print the first N lines from the file to the terminal. The syntax of head command is

```
head [options] [files]
```

The **head command options** are:

- **c** : Prints the first N bytes of file; With leading -, prints all but the last N bytes of the file.
- **n** : Prints first N lines; With leading - print all but the last N lines of each file.

Head Command Examples:

Create the following file in your linux or unix operating system for practicing the examples:

```
> cat example.txt
linux storage
ubuntu os
fedora
```

1. Display first 10 lines

By default, the head command prints the first 10 lines from a file.

```
> head example.txt
```

2. Display first N lines

Use the -n option to **print the first n lines from a file**. The following example prints the first 2 lines from the file:

```
> head -n2 example.txt
linux storage
ubuntu os
```

3. Skip last N lines

You can **skip the last N lines from a file** and print the remaining lines. The following example skips the last 2 lines and prints the remaining lines.

```
> head -n-2 example.txt
linux storage
```

4. Print the first n bytes.

use the -c option to **print the first N bytes from the file**. The following example prints the first 5 bytes from the file.

```
> head -c5 example.txt
linux
```

5. Skip printing last n bytes.

Use the leading "-", to skip printing last N bytes.

```
> head -c-7 example.txt  
linux storage  
ubuntu os
```

6. Print line between M and N lines.

You can combine the head command with tail command to **print lines between the line numbers M and N**. The following command prints the lines between numbers 5 and 10.

```
> head -n10 filename | tail -5
```