

Compressing files under Linux or UNIX cheat sheet

Both Linux and UNIX include various commands for Compressing and decompresses (read as expand compressed file). To compress files you can use gzip, bzip2 and zip commands. To expand compressed file (decompresses) you can use and gzip -d, bunzip2 (bzip2 -d), unzip commands.

Compressing files

Syntax	Description	Example(s)
gzip {filename}	Gzip compress the size of the given files using Lempel-Ziv coding (LZ77). Whenever possible, each file is replaced by one with the extension .gz.	gzip mydata.doc gzip *.jpg ls -l
bzip2 {filename}	bzip2 compresses files using the Burrows-Wheeler block sorting text compression algorithm, and Huffman coding. Compression is generally considerably better than that achieved by bzip command (LZ77/LZ78-based compressors). Whenever possible, each file is replaced by one with the extension .bz2.	bzip2 mydata.doc bzip2 *.jpg ls -l
zip {.zip-filename} {filename-to-compress}	zip is a compression and file packaging utility for Unix/Linux. Each file is stored in single .zip {.zip-filename} file with the extension .zip.	zip mydata.zip mydata.doc zip data.zip *.doc ls -l
tar -zcvf {.tgz-file} {files} tar -jcvf {.tbz2-file} {files}	The GNU tar is archiving utility but it can be use to compressing large file(s). GNU tar supports both archive compressing through gzip and bzip2. If you have more than 2 files then it is recommended to use tar instead of gzip or bzip2. -z: use gzip compress -j: use bzip2 compress	tar -zcvf data.tgz *.doc tar -zcvf pics.tar.gz *.jpg *.png tar -jcvf data.tbz2 *.doc ls -l

Decompressing files

Syntax	Description	Example(s)
gzip -d {.gz file} gunzip {.gz file}	Decompressed a file that is created using gzip command. File is restored to their original form using this command.	gzip -d mydata.doc.gz gunzip mydata.doc.gz
bzip2 -d {.bz2-file} bunzip2 {.bz2-file}	Decompressed a file that is created using bzip2 command. File is restored to their original form using this command.	bzip2 -d mydata.doc.bz2 gunzip mydata.doc.bz2
unzip {.zip file}	Extract compressed files in a ZIP archive.	unzip file.zip unzip data.zip resume.doc
tar -zxvf {.tgz-file} tar -jxvf {.tbz2-file}	Untar or decompressed a file(s) that is created using tar compressing through gzip and bzip2 filter	tar -zxvf data.tgz tar -zxvf pics.tar.gz *.jpg tar -jxvf data.tbz2

List the contents of an archive/compressed file

Some time you just wanted to look at files inside an archive or compressed file. Then all of the above command supports file list option.

Syntax	Description	Example(s)
gzip -l {.gz file}	List files from a GZIP archive	gzip -l mydata.doc.gz
unzip -l {.zip file}	List files from a ZIP archive	unzip -l mydata.zip
tar -ztvf {.tar.gz} tar -jtvf {.tbz2}	List files from a TAR archive	tar -ztvf pics.tar.gz tar -jtvf data.tbz2