

Linux & WSL Commands Cheat Sheet

Essential Commands Reference

Category	Command	Purpose / Description	Notes
User Accounts	<code>cat /etc/passwd</code>	View all users on the system	Includes system, service, and human accounts
User Accounts	<code>awk -F: '\$3 >= 1000 && \$3 < 65534 {print \$1}' /etc/passwd</code>	List only normal (human) users	Filters by UID ≥ 1000
User Accounts	<code>getent passwd {1000..60000}</code>	Another way to list human users	Uses system database, more reliable
User Accounts	<code>sudo adduser username</code>	Add a new user	Prompts to set password and home directory
User Accounts	<code>passwd username</code>	Change password for a user	Can be used for root or normal users
Root Account	<code>sudo -i</code>	Switch to root with interactive shell	Loads root environment
Root Account	<code>sudo su -</code>	Switch to root shell	Alternative to <code>sudo -i</code>
Root Account	<code>su -</code>	Switch to any user (needs their password)	Use <code>su - root</code> to switch to root
Monitoring Users	<code>w</code>	See logged-in users and what they are doing	More detailed than <code>who</code>

Monitoring Users	<code>who</code>	See logged-in users	Simple view
Monitoring Users	<code>users</code>	List usernames currently logged in	Quick and minimal
Monitoring Users	<code>last</code>	Show login/logout history	Useful for auditing
Root Account	<code>passwd</code>	Set or change root password	Run as root (<code>sudo -i</code>)
Root/Users	<code>exit</code>	Exit from current user shell	Return to previous user
WSL Specific	<code>wsl -u root</code>	Start WSL session as root	From Windows Command Prompt / PowerShell
WSL Specific	<code>wsl -d Ubuntu -u root</code>	Start specific WSL distro as root	Replace <code>Ubuntu</code> with your distro name
WSL Specific	<code>ubuntu config --default-user root</code>	Set root as default user in WSL	Only needed if you want to always start as root
Run commands as another user	<code>sudo -u username command</code>	Run a single command as another user	Useful without fully switching shell