

NuShell

Superglue for your OS

Willem Vanhulle



Wednesday, Dec 3, 2025

Introduction

What does the following Bash code do?

```
find . -type f -name "*log" -mtime +30 -exec rm {} \;
```

[ Shell

What does the following Bash code do?

```
find . -type f -name "*log" -mtime +30 -exec rm {} \;
```

[Shell]

Nu:

```
ls **/*.log | where modified < (date now) - 30day | rm
```

[Shell]

Improvements:

- Decomposes the problem with pipes
- Does not require `find` flags
- Built-in glob, duration and date type

What does Nu in NuShell stand for?

What does the following Bash code do?

```
find . -type f -name "*log" -mtime +30 -exec rm {} \;
```

[ Shell]

Nu:

```
ls **/*.log | where modified < (date now) - 30day | rm
```

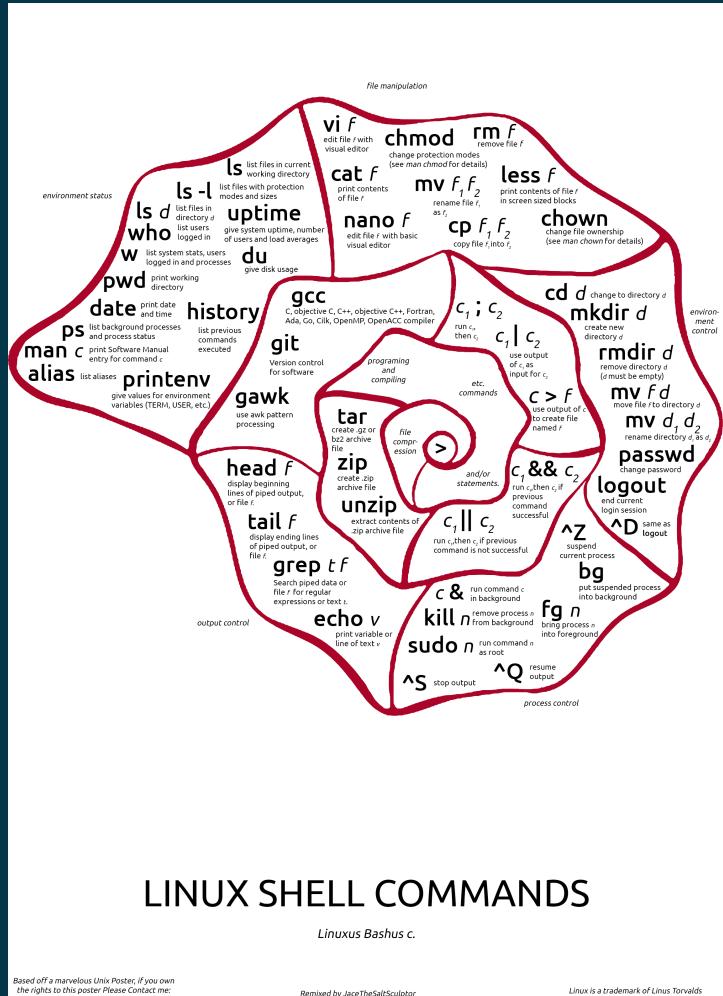
[ Shell]

Improvements:

- Decomposes the problem with pipes
- Does not require `find` flags
- Built-in glob, duration and date type

What does Nu in NuShell stand for?

New shell.



Prerequisites

Try it out out yourself

No installation: <https://www.nushell.sh/demo/>

Install locally: <https://www.nushell.sh/book/installation.html>

- Download binary: github.com/nushell/nushell/releases
- Rust:
 - ▶ Install `rustup` from <https://rustup.rs/>
 - ▶ Add Cargo bin to your PATH if not done automatically
 - ▶ `cargo install nu`
- Mac: `brew install nushell`
- Windows (winget): `winget install nushell`
- Windows (chocolatey): `choco install nushell`

Linux:

- Debian: `apt install rustup`
- Nix: `nix-shell -p nushell`
- Snap: `sudo snap install nushell --classic`

Exercises

Have a look at the *.nu files in this repo.

To run an exercise:

```
workshop.nu # With shebang  
nu workshop.nu
```

 Shell

To pipe in data from Bash:

```
cat somefile.txt | exercise.nu # With shebang  
cat somefile.txt | nu exercise.nu
```

 Shell

Piping within NuShell:

```
open somefile.txt | exercise.nu
```

 Shell

Basics

Commands output tables

ls

=>

#	#	name	type	size	modified
# =>	0	CITATION.cff	file	812 B	2 months ago
# =>	1	CODE_OF_CONDUCT.md	file	3.4 KiB	9 months ago
# =>	2	CONTRIBUTING.md	file	11.0 KiB	5 months ago
# =>	3	Cargo.lock	file	194.9 KiB	15 hours ago
# =>	4	Cargo.toml	file	9.2 KiB	15 hours ago
# =>	5	Cross.toml	file	666 B	6 months ago
# =>	6	LICENSE	file	1.1 KiB	9 months ago
# =>	7	README.md	file	12.0 KiB	15 hours ago
# =>	...				

Sort output by column

```
ls | sort-by size | reverse
```

Shell

# =>	#	name	type	size	modified
# =>	0	Cargo.lock	file	194.9 KiB	15 hours ago
# =>	1	toolkit.nu	file	20.0 KiB	15 hours ago
# =>	2	README.md	file	12.0 KiB	15 hours ago
# =>	3	CONTRIBUTING.md	file	11.0 KiB	5 months ago
# =>	4
# =>	5	LICENSE	file	1.1 KiB	9 months ago
# =>	6	CITATION.cff	file	812 B	2 months ago
# =>	7	Cross.toml	file	666 B	6 months ago
# =>	8	typos.toml	file	513 B	2 months ago
# =>					

Filtering output

```
ls | where size > 10kb
```

Shell

# =>	#	name	type	size	modified
# =>	0	CONTRIBUTING.md	file	11.0 KiB	5 months ago
# =>	1	Cargo.lock	file	194.6 KiB	2 minutes ago
# =>	2	README.md	file	12.0 KiB	16 hours ago
# =>	3	toolkit.nu	file	20.0 KiB	16 hours ago

Processes

ps

Shell

# =>	#	pid	ppid	name	status	cpu	mem	virtual
# =>	0	1	0	init(void)	Sleeping	0.00	1.2 MiB	2.2 MiB
# =>	1	8	1	init	Sleeping	0.00	124.0 KiB	2.3 MiB
# =>	2	6565	1	SessionLeader	Sleeping	0.00	108.0 KiB	2.2 MiB
# =>	3	6566	6565	Relay(6567)	Sleeping	0.00	116.0 KiB	2.2 MiB
# =>	4	6567	6566	nu	Running	0.00	28.4 MiB	1.1 GiB
# =>								

Running processes

```
ps | where status == Running
```

Shell

#	#	pid	ppid	name	status	cpu	mem	virtual
# =>								
# =>	0	6585	6584	nu	Running	0.00	31.9 MiB	1.2 GiB
# =>								

Running processes

```
ps | where status == Running
```

Shell

#	#	pid	ppid	name	status	cpu	mem	virtual
# =>								
# =>	0	6585	6584	nu	Running	0.00	31.9 MiB	1.2 GiB
# =>								

How does this work?

Running processes

```
ps | where status == Running
```

 Shell

#	pid	ppid	name	status	cpu	mem	virtual
# =>							
# =>	0	6585	6584	nu	Running	0.00	31.9 MiB
# =>							
# =>							

How does this work?

```
ps | describe
```

 Shell

```
# => table<pid: int, ppid: int, name: string, status: string, cpu: float, mem:  
filesize, virtual: filesize> (stream)
```

Running processes

```
ps | where status == Running
```

 Shell

#	pid	ppid	name	status	cpu	mem	virtual
# =>							
# =>	0	6585	6584	nu	Running	0.00	31.9 MiB
# =>							
# =>							

How does this work?

```
ps | describe
```

 Shell

```
# => table<pid: int, ppid: int, name: string, status: string, cpu: float, mem:  
filesize, virtual: filesize> (stream)
```

Exercise

Find processes sorted by greatest cpu utilization.

Exercise

Find processes sorted by greatest cpu utilization.

```
ps | where cpu > 0 | sort-by cpu | reverse
```

 Shell

# =>	#	pid	name	cpu	mem	virtual
# =>	0	11928	nu.exe	32.12	47.7 MB	20.9 MB
# =>	1	11728	Teams.exe	10.71	53.8 MB	50.8 MB
# =>	2	21460	msedgewebview2.exe	8.43	54.0 MB	36.8 MB

Pipelines

Example

```
ls  
| sort-by size  
| reverse  
| first  
| get name  
| cp $in ~
```

 Shell

Whenever possible, Nushell commands are designed to act on pipeline input.

Why does cp need \$in?

Example

```
ls  
| sort-by size  
| reverse  
| first  
| get name  
| cp $in ~
```

 Shell

Whenever possible, Nushell commands are designed to act on pipeline input.

Why does cp need \$in?

Because cp has two positional arguments.

No | needed in multi-line pipelines.

Equivalent:

```
ls | sort-by size | reverse | first | get name | cp $in ~
```

 Shell

Battle of the pipelines

Bash pipeline:

Bash command

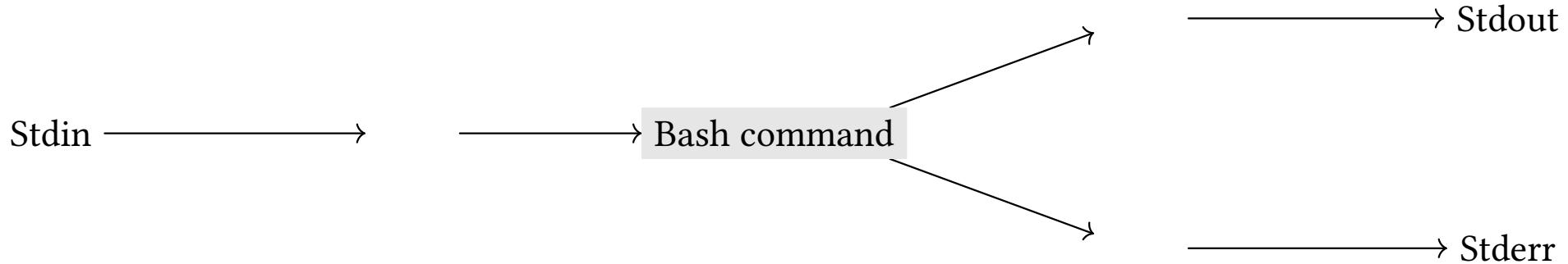
Battle of the pipelines

Bash pipeline:

Stdin —————→ —————→ Bash command

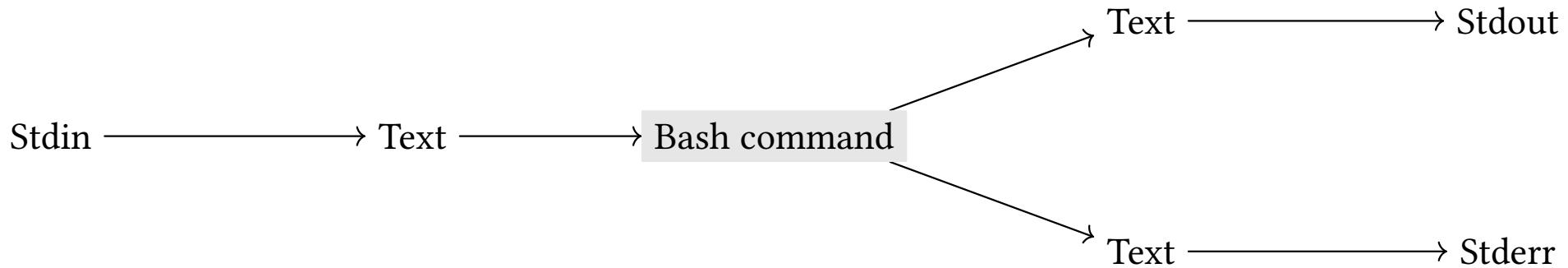
Battle of the pipelines

Bash pipeline:



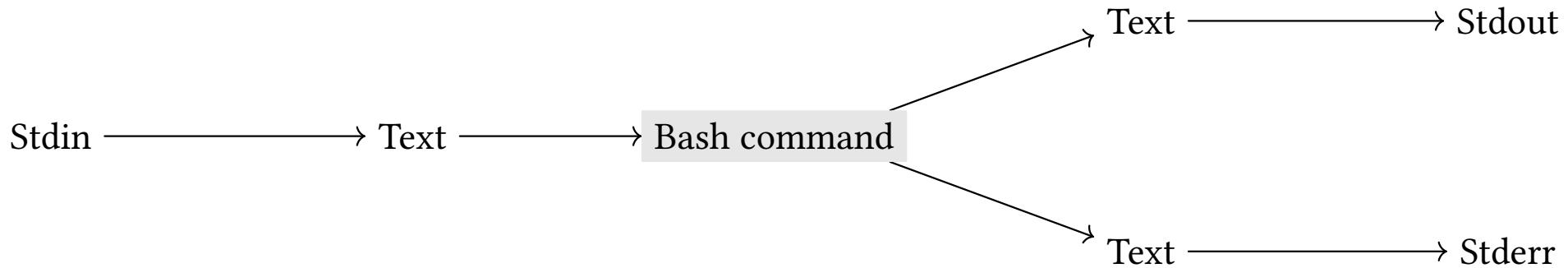
Battle of the pipelines

Bash pipeline:



Battle of the pipelines

Bash pipeline:

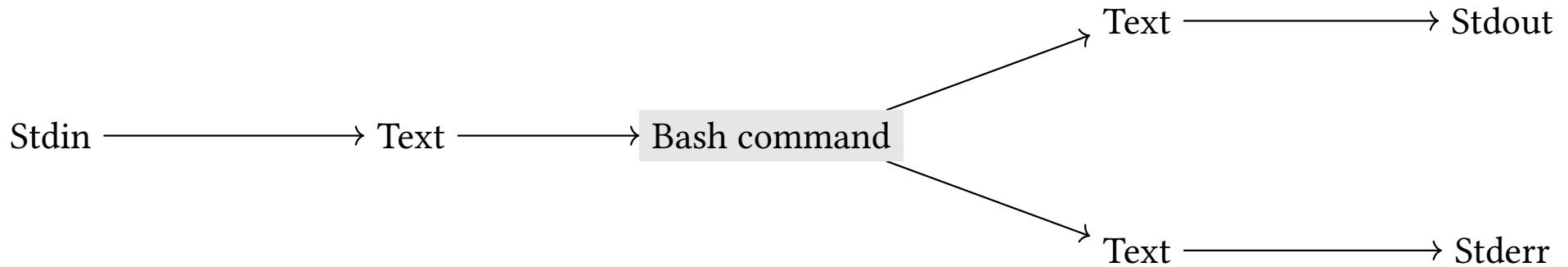


Nu pipeline:

Nu command

Battle of the pipelines

Bash pipeline:

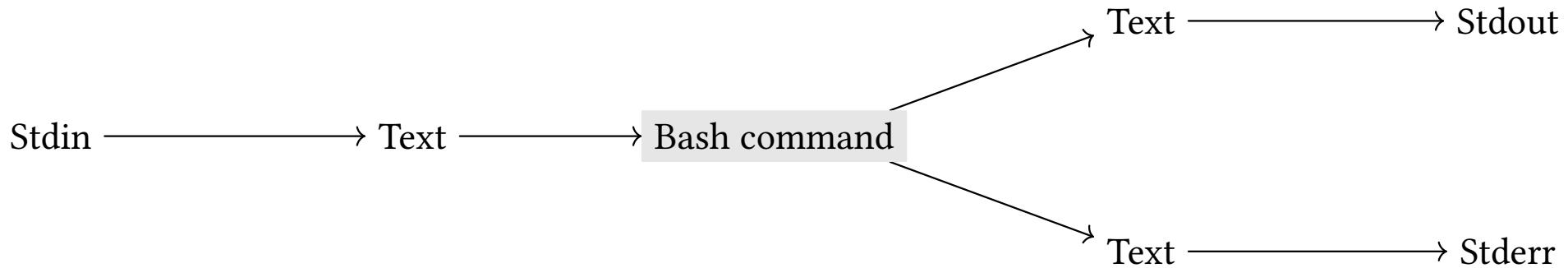


Nu pipeline:

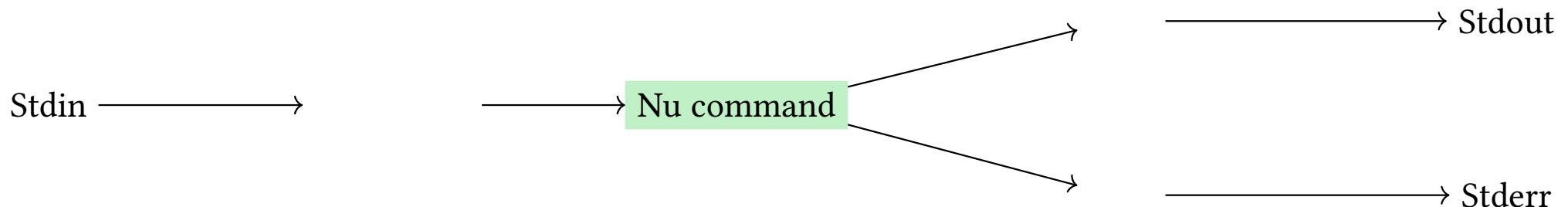


Battle of the pipelines

Bash pipeline:

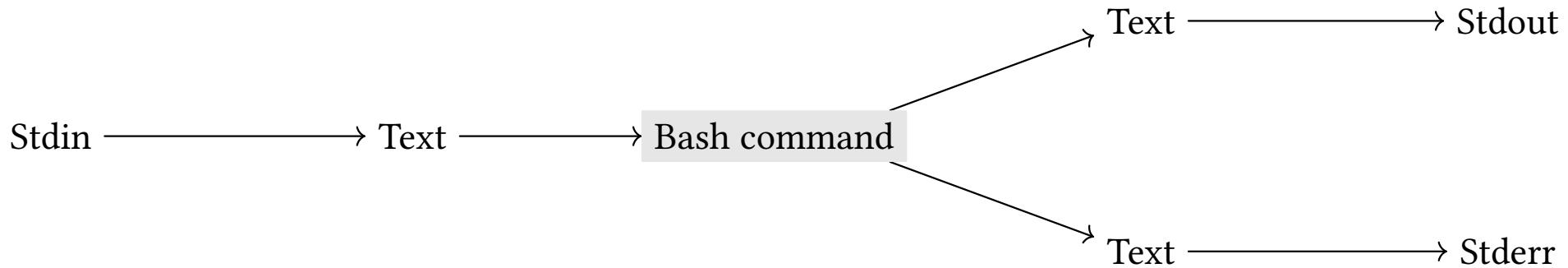


Nu pipeline:

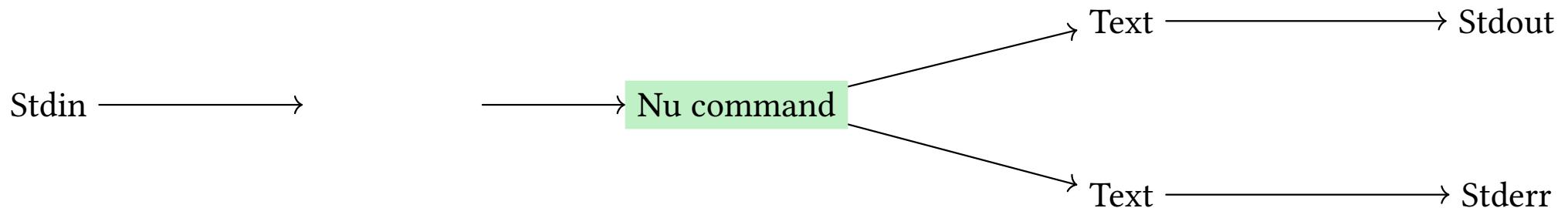


Battle of the pipelines

Bash pipeline:

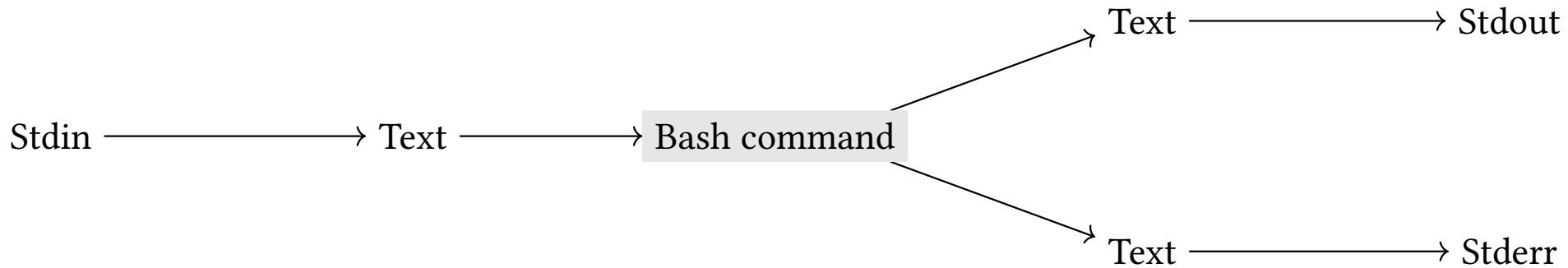


Nu pipeline:

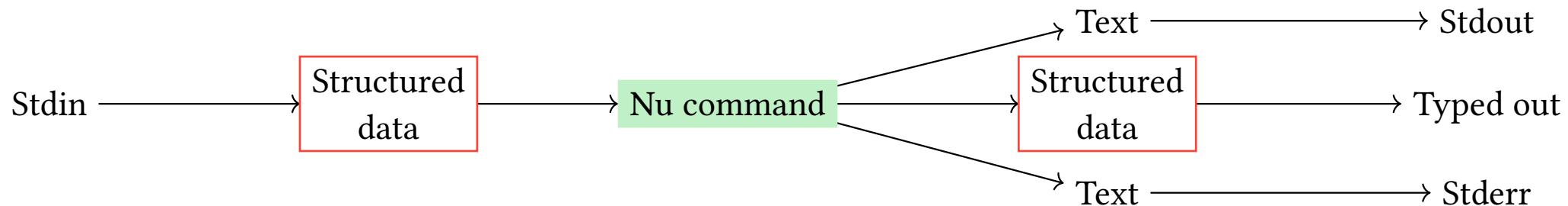


Battle of the pipelines

Bash pipeline:

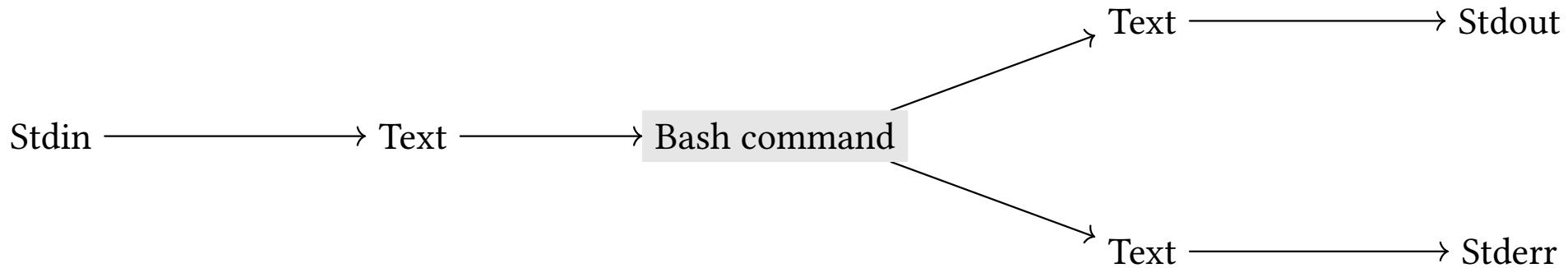


Nu pipeline:

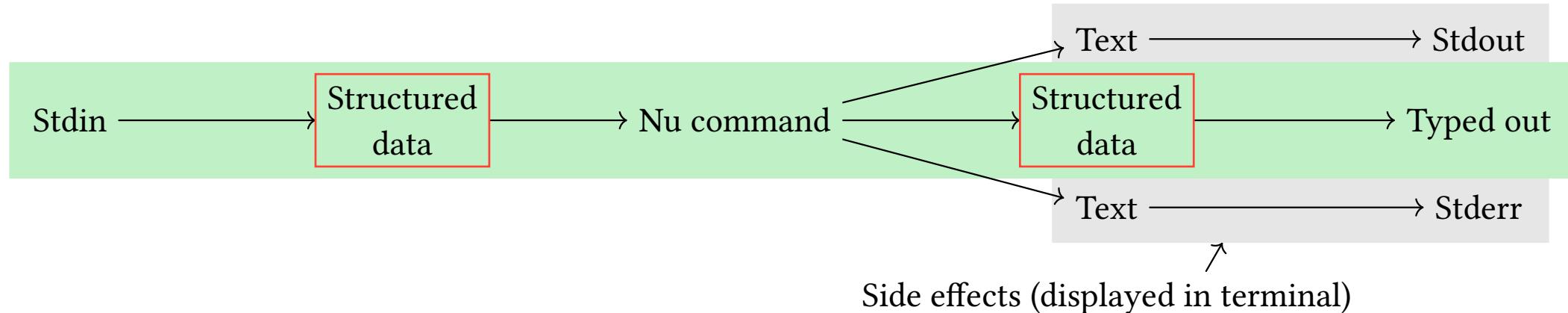


Battle of the pipelines

Bash pipeline:



Nu pipeline:



Records

Tables are built from rows of records:

```
ls  
| sort-by size  
| reverse  
| first  
| get name  
| cp $in ~
```

 Shell } (1) Table
} (2) Record
} (3) Cell path
} (4) String

Another way to find this out:

```
ls | sort-by size | reverse | first | describe  
# => record<name: string, type: string, size: filesize, modified: datetime>
```

Exercise

Spawn a process and kill it based on its name.

Hint:

Exercise

Spawn a process and kill it based on its name.

Hint:

ps | where name == Notepad2.exe

Shell

#	#	pid	name	cpu	mem	virtual
# =>						
# =>	0	9268	Notepad2.exe	0.00	32.0 MB	9.8 MB
# =>						

Solution:

Exercise

Spawn a process and kill it based on its name.

Hint:

```
ps | where name == Notepad2.exe
```

Shell

```
# => _____  
# => # pid name cpu mem virtual  
# => _____  
# => 0 9268 Notepad2.exe 0.00 32.0 MB 9.8 MB  
# => _____
```

Solution:

```
ps | where name == Notepad2.exe | get pid | get 0 | kill $in
```

Shell

```
# => _____  
# => 0 SUCCESS: Sent termination signal to the process with PID 9268.  
# => _____
```

Or more concisely:

Exercise

Spawn a process and kill it based on its name.

Hint:

```
ps | where name == Notepad2.exe
```

#	#	pid	name	cpu	mem	virtual
# =>	# =>	9268	Notepad2.exe	0.00	32.0 MB	9.8 MB
# =>	# =>					

Solution:

```
ps | where name == Notepad2.exe | get pid | get 0 | kill $in
```

# =>	0	SUCCESS: Sent termination signal to the process with PID 9268.
# =>	# =>	

Or more concisely:

```
ps | where name == Notepad2.exe | get pid.0 | kill $in
```

Custom commands

Creating simple CLI tools

Custom commands 

No positional arguments, no flags, just pipeline input and output.

```
def double [] {  
    each { |num| 2 * $num }  
}
```

 Shell

Creating simple CLI tools

Custom commands 

No positional arguments, no flags, just pipeline input and output.

```
def double [] {  
    each { |num| 2 * $num }  
}
```

 Shell

Only positional arguments:

```
def greet [name1, name2] {  
    $"Hello, ($name1) and ($name2)!"  
}
```

 Shell

```
greet Wei Mei  
# => Hello, Wei and Mei!
```

Optional arguments

Custom commands 

```
def greet [name?: string] {  
    $"Hello, ($name | default 'You')"  
}  
  
greet  
# => Hello, You
```

 Shell

Default values:

```
def congratulate [age: int = 18] {  
    $"Happy birthday! You are ($age) years old now!"  
}
```

 Shell

Typing pipeline

Custom commands 

```
def inc []: int -> int {  
    $in + 1  
    print "Did it!"  
}  
  
# => Error: nu::parser::output_type_mismatch  
# =>  
# =>     × Command output doesn't match int.  
# =>     [entry #1:1:24]  
# => 1 |  ↗ def inc []: int -> int {  
# => 2 |      $in + 1  
# => 3 |      print "Did it!"  
# => 4 |  ↗ }  
# => . |  ↗ expected int, but command outputs nothing  
# => |
```

 Shell

```
# Greet guests along with a VIP
#
# Use for birthdays, graduation parties,
# retirements, and any other event which
# celebrates an event # for a particular
# person.

def vip-greet [
    vip: string      # The special guest
    ...names: string # The other guests
] {
    for $name in $names {
        print $"Hello, ($name)!"
    }

    print $"And a special welcome to our VIP today, ($vip)!"
}
```

 Shell

Exercises

Exercise: Create a command line program / script that takes a list of numbers as input and outputs their average.

Explore

Zooming-in

Explore 

Telescoping into structured data:

[help](#) [commands](#) | [explore](#)

 Shell

Key bindings:

- Go deeper: Enter
- Go back: ESC / q
- Navigate: Arrow keys or j/k

The `help` command is for built-in Nu commands. `man` is for external commands.

Data exploration

Open interactive data explorer with :try in explore mode.

Pipe current explore view into a pipeline with:

```
$in | select name description | where name == "ls"
```

 Shell

(in older versions, maybe \$nu instead of \$in)

Exercise

Find the help page for the cp command and explore its output.

Use `help commands | explore` to find all commands in the `filters` category that contain “by” in their name.

Hint: In :try mode, use where and =~ (or str contains).

Solution:

Exercise

Find the help page for the cp command and explore its output.

Use `help commands | explore` to find all commands in the `filters` category that contain “by” in their name.

Hint: In :try mode, use where and =~ (or str contains).

Solution:

```
$in | where category == filters and name =~ by
```

 Shell

Shorthand for:

Exercise

Find the help page for the cp command and explore its output.

Use `help commands | explore` to find all commands in the `filters` category that contain “by” in their name.

Hint: In :try mode, use where and =~ (or str contains).

Solution:

```
$in | where category == filters and name =~ by
```

 Shell

Shorthand for:

```
help commands |
where (
  ($it.category == "filters") and
  ($it.name | str contains "by"))
)
```

 Shell } (1) Table output
} (2) Filter } (3) Row condition 1 } (4) Row condition 2

List

Single column tables

```
[bell book candle] | where ($it =~ 'b')
```

 Shell

```
# => 
# => 

|   |      |
|---|------|
| 0 | bell |
| 1 | book |


# =>
```

Commas are optional in list literals.

```
let colors = [yellow green]
let colors = ($colors | prepend red)
let colors = ($colors | append purple)
let colors = ($colors ++ ["blue"])
let colors = ([black] ++ $colors)
$colors
# => [black red yellow green purple blue]
```

 Shell

Iterating over lists

```
let names = [Mark Tami Amanda Jeremy]
$names | each { |elt| $"Hello, ($elt)!" }
# Outputs "Hello, Mark!" and three more similar lines.
```

 Shell

```
$names | enumerate | each { |elt| $"($elt.index + 1) - ($elt.item)" }
# Outputs "1 - Mark", "2 - Tami", etc.
```

Filtering lists:

```
let colors = [red orange yellow green blue purple]
$colors | where ($it | str ends-with 'e')
# The block passed to `where` must evaluate to a boolean.
# This outputs the list [orange blue purple].
```

 Shell

Boolean conditions:

```
let colors = [red green blue]
# Do any color names end with "e"?
$colors | any {|elt| $elt | str ends-with "e" } # true
```

 Shell

Exercise

Exercise: Compute the sum of squares of the first 10 natural numbers.

Solution:

Exercise

Exercise: Compute the sum of squares of the first 10 natural numbers.

Solution:

```
1..10 | each { |n| $n * $n } | math sum
```

 Shell

Exercise

Exercise: Compute the sum of squares of the first 10 natural numbers.

Solution:

```
1..10 | each { |n| $n * $n } | math sum
```

 Shell

Exercise: Use the `lines` command to find out the first commit message in the Git history of this repository.

Solution:

Exercise

Exercise: Compute the sum of squares of the first 10 natural numbers.

Solution:

```
1..10 | each { |n| $n * $n } | math sum
```

 Shell

Exercise: Use the `lines` command to find out the first commit message in the Git history of this repository.

Solution:

```
git log --oneline | lines | get 0 | str trim
```

 Shell

Records

Single-row tables

```
let my_record = {  
    name: "Sam"  
    age: 30  
}  
  
$my_record | update age { $in + 1 }  
  
# =>  
# => 

|      |     |
|------|-----|
| name | Sam |
| age  | 31  |

  
# =>
```

 Shell

Displayed like two columns, but still a single-row table (record).

Parsing JSON

```
# Nushell
{ "apples": 543, "bananas": 411, "oranges": 0 }
# =>
# => | apples | 543
# => | bananas | 411
# => | oranges | 0
# =>

# JSON
'{ "apples": 543, "bananas": 411, "oranges": 0 }' | from json
# =>
# => | apples | 543
# => | bananas | 411
# => | oranges | 0
# =>
```

Shell

Iterating

```
{ "apples": 543, "bananas": 411, "oranges": 0 } | items { |fruit, count| $"We have ($fruit) ($count)" }
```

```
# => [ ]  
# => [ 0 | We have apples 543 ]  
# => [ 1 | We have bananas 411 ]  
# => [ 2 | We have oranges 0 ]  
# =>
```

 Shell

Exercise

Exercise: Convert the following JQ command to Nushell:

```
echo '[{"name": "Alice", "age": 30}, {"name": "Bob", "age": 25}]' | jq -r '.[] | select(.age > 28)'
```

 Shell

Solution:

Exercise

Exercise: Convert the following JQ command to Nushell:

```
echo '[{"name": "Alice", "age": 30}, {"name": "Bob", "age": 25}]' | jq -r '.[] | select(.age > 28)'
```

 Shell

Solution:

```
'[{"name": "Alice", "age": 30}, {"name": "Bob", "age": 25}]'  
| from json  
| where age > 28
```

 Shell

#	name	age
0	Alice	30

Exercise

Exercise: COnvert following JQ command to Nushell:

```
echo '[1, 2, 3, 4, 5]' |  
jq -r 'map(. * 2)'
```

 Shell

Solution:

```
'[1, 2, 3, 4, 5]'  
| from json  
| each { |x| $x * 2 }  
# => 

|   |    |
|---|----|
|   |    |
| 0 | 2  |
| 1 | 4  |
| 2 | 6  |
| 3 | 8  |
| 4 | 10 |
|   |    |

  
# => 0 2  
# => 1 4  
# => 2 6  
# => 3 8  
# => 4 10  
# =>
```

 Shell

Tables

Creating tables

```
let first = [[a b]; [1 2]]  
let second = [[a b]; [3 4]]  
$first | append $second  
  
# => ┌─────────┐  
# => # | a | b  
# => └─────────┘  
# => 0 | 1 | 2  
# => 1 | 3 | 4  
# => ┌─────────┘
```

 Shell

Getting data out

ls get name
=> _____
=> 0 files.rs
=> 1 lib.rs
=> 2 lite_parse.rs
=> 3 parse.rs
=> 4 path.rs
=> 5 shapes.rs
=> _____

Shell

ls select name
=> _____
=> # name
=> _____
=> 0 files.rs
=> 1 lib.rs
=> 2 lite_parse.rs
=> 3 parse.rs
=> 4 path.rs
=> 5 shapes.rs
=> _____

Shell

What is the difference between get and select?

Getting data out

```
ls | get name  
# => _____  
# => 0 files.rs  
# => 1 lib.rs  
# => 2 lite_parse.rs  
# => 3 parse.rs  
# => 4 path.rs  
# => 5 shapes.rs  
# => _____
```

Shell

```
ls | select name  
# => _____  
# => # name  
# => _____  
# => 0 files.rs  
# => 1 lib.rs  
# => 2 lite_parse.rs  
# => 3 parse.rs  
# => 4 path.rs  
# => 5 shapes.rs  
# => _____
```

Shell

What is the difference between `get` and `select`?

get returns a single column as a list, while select returns a table with one column.

What is the type of the arguments passed to `get` and `select`?

Getting data out

ls get name	
# =>	_____
# => 0	files.rs
# => 1	lib.rs
# => 2	lite_parse.rs
# => 3	parse.rs
# => 4	path.rs
# => 5	shapes.rs
# =>	_____

Shell

ls select name	
# =>	_____
# => #	name
# =>	_____
# => 0	files.rs
# => 1	lib.rs
# => 2	lite_parse.rs
# => 3	parse.rs
# => 4	path.rs
# => 5	shapes.rs
# =>	_____

Shell

What is the difference between `get` and `select`?

get returns a single column as a list, while select returns a table with one column.

What is the type of the arguments passed to `get` and `select`?

So-called “cell-paths”, relative paths into structured data.

Exercise

Download dataset with `fetch-data.nu`.

Explore the dataset: `open data/covid_19_data.csv | explore`.

Exercise: try sorting by Deaths descending

Solution:

Exercise

Download dataset with `fetch-data.nu`.

Explore the dataset: `open data/covid_19_data.csv | explore`.

Exercise: try sorting by Deaths descending

Solution:

```
open data/covid_19_data.csv | sort-by Deaths --reverse
```

 Shell

Data exploration

Grouping

```
open data/covid_19_data.csv | group-by `Country/Region`
```

Shell

# =>	Afghanistan	[table 75 rows]
# =>	Albania	[table 74 rows]
# =>	Algeria	[table 75 rows]
=>
# =>		

Does the previous command return a record or a table?

Grouping

```
open data/covid_19_data.csv | group-by `Country/Region`
```

Shell

# =>	Afghanistan	[table 75 rows]
# =>	Albania	[table 74 rows]
# =>	Algeria	[table 75 rows]
=>
# =>		

Does the previous command return a record or a table?

A record: Keys = country names, Values = tables of rows for that country.

From record to table

Records cannot be iterated with each (which expects a table/list).

Use transpose to convert a record into a table:

```
{a: 1, b: 2} | transpose
```

Shell

```
# =>
# =>      # | column0 | column1
# =>      - |         |         |
# =>      0 | a       |         1
# =>      1 | b       |         2
# =>
```

```
{a: 1, b: 2} | transpose key value
```

```
# =>
# =>      # | key    | value
# =>      - |         |         |
# =>      0 | a     |     1
# =>      1 | b     |     2
# =>
```

Total deaths per country

```
open data/covid_19_data.csv  
| group-by `Country/Region`  
| transpose country rows
```

=>

#	country	rows
0	Afghanistan	[table 75 rows]
1	Albania	[table 74 rows]
...		

```
# Now we can iterate with each  
open data/covid_19_data.csv  
| group-by `Country/Region`  
| transpose country rows  
| each {|group| $group.rows | get Deaths | math sum}
```

What does `$group.rows` contain?

Total deaths per country

```
open data/covid_19_data.csv  
| group-by `Country/Region`  
| transpose country rows
```

```
# => 

| #   | country     | rows            |
|-----|-------------|-----------------|
| 0   | Afghanistan | [table 75 rows] |
| 1   | Albania     | [table 74 rows] |
| ... |             |                 |


```

```
# Now we can iterate with each
```

```
open data/covid_19_data.csv  
| group-by `Country/Region`  
| transpose country rows  
| each { |group| $group.rows | get Deaths | math sum}
```

What does `$group.rows` contain?

The table of all COVID rows for that country in the original table.

Exercises

Exercise: Add an additional column with country name and sort by deaths. Solution:

Exercises

Exercise: Add an additional column with country name and sort by deaths. Solution:

```
open data/covid_19_data.csv
| group-by `Country/Region`
| transpose country rows
| each {|group|
  {country: $group.country, total_deaths: ($group.rows | get Deaths | math sum)}
}
| sort-by total_deaths --reverse
```

 Shell

What would be an even simpler way to achieve this without using transpose?

Exercises

Exercise: Add an additional column with country name and sort by deaths. Solution:

```
open data/covid_19_data.csv
| group-by `Country/Region`
| transpose country rows
| each {|group|
  {country: $group.country, total_deaths: ($group.rows | get Deaths | math sum)}
}
| sort-by total_deaths --reverse
```

Shell

What would be an even simpler way to achieve this without using transpose?

Using items directly on the grouped record.

```
open data/covid_19_data.csv
| group-by `Country/Region`
| items {|country, rows|
  {country: $country, total_deaths: ($rows | get Deaths | math sum)}
}
| sort-by total_deaths --reverse
```

Shell