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|  | In your case, "EOF" is known as a "Here Tag". Basically << Here tells the shell that you are going to enter a multiline string until the "tag" Here. You can name this tag as you want, it's often EOF or STOP.  Some rules about the Here tags:   1. The tag can be any string, uppercase or lowercase, though most people use uppercase by convention. 2. The tag will not be considered as a Here tag if there are other words in that line. In this case, it will merely be considered part of the string. The tag should be by itself on a separate line, to be considered a tag. 3. The tag should have no leading or trailing spaces in that line to be considered a tag. Otherwise it will be considered as part of the string.   example:  $ cat >> test <<HERE  > Hello world HERE <--- Not the end of string  > This is a test  > HERE <-- Leading space, so not end of string  > and a new line  > HERE <-- Now we have the end of the string |