

Command Line Essentials — Cheat Sheet

FREE CHEAT SHEET

One page from the complete **Command Line Essentials Companion Guide**. [Get the full guide →](#)

Navigation and Files

TASK	COMMAND
Where am I	<code>pwd</code>
List (detailed, hidden)	<code>ls -la</code>
Change directory	<code>cd path</code> / <code>cd ..</code> / <code>cd ~</code>
Make directory (+parents)	<code>mkdir -p path</code>
Create empty file	<code>touch file</code>
Copy	<code>cp source dest</code> / <code>cp -r</code> for dirs
Move / rename	<code>mv old new</code>
Delete	<code>rm file</code> / <code>rm -r dir</code>

Reading and Searching

TASK	COMMAND
Page through a file	<code>less file</code>
First / last lines	<code>head file</code> / <code>tail file</code>
Follow a growing file	<code>tail -f file</code>
Search contents	<code>grep -rin "text" dir/</code>
Find by name	<code>find . -name "*.py"</code>
Count lines	<code>wc -l file</code>

Redirection and Pipes

SYMBOL	MEANING
<code>></code> / <code>>></code>	Overwrite / append stdout
<code>2></code>	Redirect stderr
<code> </code>	Pipe output to next command
<code>&&</code> / <code>;</code> / <code> </code>	Then (if ok) / then (always) / then (if failed)

Permissions and Processes

TASK	COMMAND
Make executable	<code>chmod +x file</code>
List processes	<code>ps aux</code>
Stop / force-stop	<code>kill PID</code> / <code>kill -9 PID</code>
Run in background	<code>command &</code>
List jobs / resume	<code>jobs</code> / <code>fg</code>

Environment and Config

TASK	COMMAND
Set for this session	<code>export VAR=value</code>
Shortcut	<code>alias name="command"</code>
Reload config	<code>source ~/.bashrc</code>
Re-run last command	<code>!!</code>

Script Skeleton

```
#!/bin/bash
for file in *.txt; do
    echo "Processing $file"
done
```

Golden Rules

RULE

Check `pwd` before running anything that moves, deletes, or overwrites.

RULE

Preview a wildcard with `ls` before using it with `rm`.

RULE

There is no undo for `rm`. Treat it with real caution.

RULE

No spaces around `=` in a variable assignment.

RULE

Try plain `kill` before `kill -9`.