bat cat with syntax highlighting

CONCEPTS

bat is cat with syntax highlighting, line numbers, git change marks and automatic paging. Output to a pipe or file is plain, so it is a safe drop-in for cat.

Input files or stdin
↓ detect syntax
Highlight theme + language
↓ decorate
Decorations numbers, grid, changes
↓ if terminal
Pager less, only if long

On Debian and Ubuntu the binary may be called batcat. Link it: ln -s /usr/bin/batcat ~/.local/bin/bat

VIEWING

bat *<file>*
View a file with highlighting

bat *<a>* *<b>*
Show several files in one stream

<cmd> **|** **bat -l** *<lang>*
Highlight piped input as a language

bat -r *<start>*:*<end>* *<file>*
Show only these lines

bat -r :*<n>* *<file>*
Show the first n lines

bat -r *<n>*: *<file>*
Show from line n to the end

bat -r *<n>*:+*<m>* *<file>*
Show m lines starting at n

bat -r *<n>*::*<c>* *<file>*
Show line n with c lines of context

bat -A *<file>*
Show tabs, spaces and line endings

bat -l *<lang>* *<file>*
Override the detected language

bat --list-languages
List supported languages

bat --map-syntax '*<glob>*:*<lang>*'
Map a file pattern to a language

OUTPUT STYLE

bat -p *<file>*
Plain: no numbers, grid or header

bat -pp *<file>*
Plain and no paging

bat -n *<file>*
Line numbers only

bat --style numbers,changes *<file>*
Pick decoration components

bat --color always
Keep colors when piping

--style components

Name	Draws
numbers	line numbers
changes	git add/modify marks
header	file name header
grid	borders
rule	line between files
snip	cut marks for ranges

PAGING

bat --paging never *<file>*
Print directly, no pager

bat -P *<file>*
Short form of paging never

bat --paging always *<file>*
Page even short output

bat --pager "less -RFK"
Use a specific pager command

alias cat='bat --paging=never'
Replace cat in the shell

tail -f *<log>* **| bat --paging=never -l log**
Colorize a live log

THEMES

bat --list-themes
List themes with a preview

bat --theme *<name>* *<file>*
Use a theme for one run

export BAT_THEME="*<name>***"**
Set the default theme

bat --list-themes | fzf --preview="bat --theme={} --color=always *<file>*"
Browse themes with a live preview

CONFIG AND CACHE

bat --generate-config-file
Create a starter config file

bat --config-file
Print the config file path

bat --config-dir
Print the config directory

bat cache --build
Rebuild cache after adding syntaxes or themes

The config file holds one option per line, written as on the command line (--theme="TwoDark", --style="numbers,changes"). Command-line flags override it.

WITH OTHER TOOLS

git diff --name-only --relative --diff-filter=d -z | xargs -0 bat --diff
Show changed files with their diff

git show *<rev>*:*<path>* **| bat -l** *<lang>*
View a file from another revision

export MANPAGER="bat -plman"
Colorize man pages

fzf --preview "bat --color=always --style=numbers --line-range=:500 {}"
Preview files in fzf

fd *<pattern>* **-X bat**
Open all matches with bat

<cmd> **--help | bat -plhelp**
Colorize help output

bat --diff *<file>*
Show only changed lines of a file

RECIPES

Fuzzy file picker with preview

```
fzf --preview 'bat --color=always
--style=numbers --line-range=:500
{}' \
    --bind
'enter:become(${EDITOR:-vi} {})'
```

Colored man pages and help

```
export MANPAGER="bat -plman"
man 2 select
git --help | bat -plhelp
```