# man Manual page lookup

## CONCEPTS

A name can exist in several sections: printf(1) is the command, printf(3) the C function. Write man 3 printf to pick.

### Manual sections

| Section | Holds |
|---|---|
| 1 | User commands |
| 2 | System calls |
| 3 | Library functions |
| 4 | Devices and special files |
| 5 | File formats and config |
| 6 | Games |
| 7 | Overviews and conventions |
| 8 | Admin commands |

**Do not know the name** a topic or word
↓ `man -k`
**Pick a hit** name (section)
↓ `man`
**Read the page** in the pager
↓ `/ search`
**Find the option** or example

man shows pages through a pager, normally less, so every less key works inside it.

Shell builtins (cd, export, alias) have no own page: use help <name>, or man bash and search there.

## OPENING PAGES

`man` *<name>*
Show the manual page

`man` *<section>* *<name>*
Show the page from one section

`man -a` *<name>*
Show every matching page in turn

`man -l` *<file>*
Open a page from a local file

`man -w` *<name>*
Print the path of the page file

## SEARCHING PAGES

`man -k` *<word>*
Search names and descriptions

`man -f` *<name>*
One-line summary of a page

## INSIDE THE PAGER

**`Space / b`**
Page forward / back

**`j / k`**
Line down / up

**`g / G`**
Top / bottom of the page

**`/`***`<text>`*
Search forward

**`n / N`**
Next / previous match

**`q`**
Quit

**`/^ *-`***`<x>`*
Jump to the description of option -x

## OTHER HELP SOURCES

*<command>* **`--help`**
Built-in usage summary

**`help`** *<builtin>*
Help for a shell builtin

**`type`** *<name>*
Is it a builtin, alias or file?

## READING A PAGE

### Conventions in SYNOPSIS

| Written | Means |
|---|---|
| `[x]` | optional |
| `<x> or x in italics` | replace with a value |
| `a \| b` | pick one |
| `x ...` | can repeat |

Read NAME and SYNOPSIS first, then jump to the option you need; EXAMPLES and SEE ALSO often save the most time.