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.