sort, uniq, cut and tr Slice and count text

START HERE

`sort <file>`
Sort lines alphabetically

`cut -d, -f1,3 <file>`
Pick CSV columns

`sort -n / -h`
Numeric / human sizes

`tr a-z A-Z`
Translate characters

`sort <file> | uniq -c | sort -rn`
Frequency count

`tr -d '\r'`
Delete characters

`sort -u <file>`
Sort and drop duplicates

`sort -t: -k3 -n /etc/passwd`
Sort by a field

cut pick columns → lines → **sort** order / group → adjacent → **uniq** collapse, count → counts → **sort -rn** rank by count

CONCEPTS

These are line filters: each reads stdin or files and writes stdout, so they chain with pipes. tr reads stdin only.

uniq only merges adjacent lines, so sort first (or use sort -u).

Sort order depends on the locale. Use LC_ALL=C for plain byte order, and it is also much faster.

SORTING

`sort <file>`
Sort lines alphabetically

`sort -r <file>`
Reverse the order

`sort -n <file>`
Numeric sort
Without -n, 10 sorts before 9.

`sort -h <file>`
Human sizes such as 2K, 1G
Pairs well with du -h output.

`sort -u <file>`
Keep one of each equal line

`sort -V <file>`
Version sort (1.2 before 1.10)

`sort -f <file>`
Ignore case

`sort -M <file>`
Sort by month name

`sort -g <file>`
General numeric (floats, 1e3)

`sort -R <file>`
Shuffle, equal lines stay together

`sort -d <file>`
Dictionary order: blanks and alphanumerics

`sort -b <file>`
Ignore leading blanks

`sort -s <file>`
Stable: keep input order on ties

`sort -o <file> <file>`
Write result in place
Plain > redirect would empty the input first.

`sort -c <file>`
Check if already sorted

`sort -m <a> <b>`
Merge already sorted files

`sort -z <file>`
NUL-delimited lines

SORTING (cont.)

`sort -S <size> -T <dir> <file>`
Set buffer size and temp dir

`sort --parallel=<n> <file>`
Use n threads

SORTING BY KEY

`sort -k <n> <file>`
Sort from field n to end of line
Use -k n,n to sort on that field alone.

`sort -k <n>,<n> <file>`
Sort on field n only

`sort -t <sep> -k <n> <file>`
Set the field separator
Without -t, fields split where blanks meet text.

`sort -k <n>n,<n> <file>`
Numeric on one field

`sort -k <a>,<a> -k <b>nr,<b> <file>`
Primary then secondary key

`sort -k <n>.<c> <file>`
Start at character c of field n

`sort -t$'\t' -k <n> <file>`
Tab-separated (bash quoting)

`sort --debug -k <n> <file>`
Show which part is compared

Key options like n or r placed on a -k override the global ones for that key only.

UNIQ

`uniq <file>`
Collapse adjacent duplicates

`uniq -c <file>`
Prefix each line with its count

`uniq -d <file>`
Only repeated lines, one each

`uniq -u <file>`
Only lines that never repeat

`uniq -D <file>`
Every repeated line, all copies

`uniq -i <file>`
Ignore case

`uniq -f <n> <file>`
Skip first n fields when comparing

`uniq -s <n> <file>`
Skip first n characters

`uniq -w <n> <file>`
Compare only first n characters

`uniq --group <file>`
Blank line between groups

UNIQ (cont.)

`sort <file> | uniq -c | sort -rn`
Rank lines by frequency

`sort <a> <b> | uniq -d`
Lines present in both sorted lists
Only exact if each list has no internal duplicates; otherwise use comm.

CUT

`cut -f <list> <file>`
Select tab-separated fields

`cut -d <sep> -f <list> <file>`
Fields with a custom delimiter
The delimiter must be a single character.

`cut -c <list> <file>`
Select by character position

`cut -b <list> <file>`
Select by byte position

`cut -f 2- <file>`
From field 2 to the end
Ranges: N, N-M, N-, -M, comma separated.

`cut -f <list> --complement <file>`
All fields except these

`cut -s -f <list> <file>`
Skip lines with no delimiter
Otherwise such lines are printed whole.

`cut --output-delimiter=<str> -f <list>`
Change the output separator

cut cannot reorder columns and treats every delimiter separately, so runs of spaces give empty fields. Use awk for those.

TR

`tr <set1> <set2>`
Translate characters one to one

`tr a-z A-Z`
Lowercase to uppercase

`tr '[:lower:]' '[:upper:]'`
Case change using classes

`tr -d <set>`
Delete these characters

`tr -d '\r'`
Strip carriage returns

`tr -s <set>`
Squeeze repeats into one

TR (cont.)

`tr -s ' '`
Collapse runs of spaces

`tr -cd '[:alnum:]'`
Keep only letters and digits

`tr -c <set1> <set2>`
Replace everything not in the set

`tr '\n' ' '`
Join lines with spaces

`tr ',' '\n'`
Split on commas into lines

`tr '\0' '\n'`
NUL-separated to lines

`tr -cs '[:alpha:]' '\n'`
One word per line

tr works on single characters, not words or patterns. For strings or regexes use sed.

Common tr classes

Class	Matches
`[:alpha:]`	letters
`[:digit:]`	digits
`[:alnum:]`	letters and digits
`[:space:]`	all whitespace
`[:blank:]`	space and tab
`[:punct:]`	punctuation
`[:upper:]` `[:lower:]`	case pairs

ALSO HANDY

`paste <a> <b>`
Join files side by side with tabs

`paste -sd, <file>`
Join all lines with commas

`paste -d <sep> <a> <b>`
Custom join character

`wc -l <file>`
Count lines

RECIPES

Top 10 client IPs in a log

```
awk '{print $1}' access.log \
  | sort | uniq -c | sort -rn |
head -10
```

Biggest directories first

```
du -sh * | sort -rh | head
```

Sort a CSV by column 3, numerically, keep header

```
head -1 <f.csv>; tail -n +2
<f.csv> \
  | sort -t, -k3,3 -n
```

Unique words in a text, most common first

```
tr -cs '[:alpha:]' '\n' < <file>
| tr A-Z a-z \
  | sort | uniq -c | sort -rn |
head
```