xmllint XML check and query

CONCEPTS

With no flags xmllint parses the file and reprints it; add --noout when you only want the exit code.

Parse well-formed?
↓ `--xinclude`
Process XInclude, entities
↓ `--valid` / `--schema`
Validate DTD, XSD, RNG
↓ `--xpath` / `--format`
Output tree, nodes, c14n

Exit code tells the story: 0 ok, 3 invalid, 4 not well-formed, 10 XPath error, 11 XPath empty.

CHECK AND FORMAT

`xmllint <file>`
Parse and print the document

`xmllint --noout <file>`
Check well-formedness only

`xmllint --format <file>`
Reindent output

`xmllint --format <file> --output <out>`
Write result to a file

`xmllint --format - < <file>`
Read from stdin

`curl -s <url> | xmllint --format -`
Pretty-print a download

`XMLLINT_INDENT="    " xmllint --format <file>`
Choose the indent string

XPATH QUERIES

`xmllint --xpath "//book" <file>`
Select all matching nodes

`xmllint --xpath "//book/title/text()" <file>`
Get text content

`xmllint --xpath "string(//book[1]/title)" <file>`
Get one value as a string

`xmllint --xpath "count(//book)" <file>`
Count nodes

XPATH QUERIES (cont.)

`xmllint --xpath "//book/@id" <file>`
Select attributes

`xmllint --xpath "//book[@id='b2']" <file>`
Filter by attribute

`xmllint --xpath "//book[price>10]/title" <file>`
Filter by child value

`xmllint --xpath "//*[local-name()='item']" <file>`
Match ignoring namespaces

`xmllint --xpath "boolean(//book)" <file>`
Test existence

`xmllint --xpath "//book[last()]" <file>`
Pick the last node

`xmllint --xpath "//book[position()⩽3]" <file>`
Pick the first three

A node-set result prints as XML, a string or number as bare text. Wrap with string() for a clean value.

An empty result prints 'XPath set is empty' and exits 11, so scripts can test with if.

XPath quick reference

Syntax	Meaning
`/a/b`	child b of root a
`//b`	b anywhere
`. ..`	this node, parent
`@id`	attribute id
`b[2]`	second b
`b[@id='x']`	b with id x
`text()`	text children
`*`	any element
`a/following-sibling::b`	later sibling b
`contains(@c,'x')`	substring test
`starts-with(n,'x')`	prefix test
`normalize-space(n)`	trim whitespace

VALIDATION

`xmllint --noout --schema <xsd> <file>`
Validate against an XSD

VALIDATION (cont.)

`xmllint --noout --relaxng <rng> <file>`
Validate against RelaxNG

`xmllint --noout --dtdvalid <dtd> <file>`
Validate against a DTD file

`xmllint --noout --valid <file>`
Validate with the document's own DOCTYPE

`xmllint --noout --schematron <sch> <file>`
Validate against Schematron

`xmllint --noout --schema <xsd> <file1> <file2>`
Check several files at once

`xmllint --noout --stream --valid <file>`
Validate big files with low memory

`xmllint --noout --schema <xsd> <file> && echo ok`
Use the exit code in scripts

Validation success prints '<file> validates' to stderr; failures return exit 3 (or 5 if the schema itself is broken).

PARSING OPTIONS

`xmllint --recover <file>`
Salvage the parsable parts

`xmllint --nonet <file>`
Never fetch over the network

`xmllint --xinclude <file>`
Resolve XInclude elements

`xmllint --noent <file>`
Substitute entity references

`xmllint --huge <file>`
Lift built-in parser limits

HTML, CANONICAL, SHELL

`xmllint --html <file>`
Parse as HTML

`xmllint --html --xpath "//a/@href" <file>`
Scrape links from HTML