

tee Cheatsheet

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Quick reference for splitting command output to terminal and files with tee in Linux

The `tee` command reads from standard input and writes to standard output and one or more files at the same time. This cheatsheet covers overwrite and append modes, pipeline patterns, privileged writes, and practical logging examples.

Basic Syntax

Core `tee` command forms.

<code>`command`</code>	<code>tee file.txt`</code>
<code>`command`</code>	<code>tee -a file.txt`</code>
<code>`command`</code>	<code>tee file1.txt file2.txt`</code>
<code>`command`</code>	<code>tee`</code>
<code>`command`</code>	<code>tee /tmp/out.log >/dev/null`</code>

Common Options

Frequently used flags for `tee`.

<code>-a, --append</code>	Append to files instead of overwriting
<code>-i, --ignore-interrupts</code>	Ignore interrupt signals
<code>--help</code>	Show help text
<code>--version</code>	Show version information

Logging Command Output

Capture output while still seeing it live.

<code>`ping -c 4 linuxize.com`</code>	<code>tee ping.log`</code>
<code>`journalctl -u nginx -n 50`</code>	<code>tee nginx.log`</code>
<code>`ls -la`</code>	<code>tee listing.txt`</code>
<code>`df -h`</code>	<code>tee disk-usage.txt`</code>
<code>`free -h`</code>	<code>tee memory.txt`</code>

Append Mode

Keep history in log files with `-a`.

<code>`date`</code>	<code>tee -a run.log`</code>
<code>`echo "deploy started"`</code>	<code>tee -a deploy.log`</code>
<code>`./backup.sh 2>&1`</code>	<code>tee -a backup.log`</code>
<code>`tail -n 20 app.log`</code>	<code>tee -a diagnostics.log`</code>
<code>`curl -I https://linuxize.com`</code>	<code>tee -a headers.log`</code>

Pipelines and Filters

Combine `tee` with text-processing commands.

<code>`cat app.log`</code>	<code>tee copy.log`</code>
<code>`ps aux`</code>	<code>tee processes.txt`</code>
<code>`sort users.txt`</code>	<code>tee sorted-users.txt`</code>
<code>`dmesg`</code>	<code>tee dmesg.txt`</code>
<code>`find /etc -maxdepth 1 -type f`</code>	<code>tee etc-files.txt`</code>

Privileged Writes

Write to root-owned files safely.

<code>`echo "127.0.0.1 app.local"`</code>	<code>sudo tee -a /etc/hosts`</code>
<code>`printf "key=value\n"`</code>	<code>sudo tee /etc/myapp.conf >/dev/null`</code>
<code>`cat config.conf`</code>	<code>sudo tee /etc/myapp/config.conf >/dev/null`</code>
<code>`echo "net.ipv4.ip_forward=1"`</code>	<code>sudo tee -a /etc/sysctl.conf`</code>
<code>`sudo sysctl -p`</code>	<code>tee sysctl-apply.log`</code>

Troubleshooting

Quick checks for common `tee` issues.

Permission denied	Use <code>sudo tee</code> for root-owned targets instead of <code>sudo echo ... > file</code>
File content replaced unexpectedly	Use <code>-a</code> when you need append mode
No output on terminal	Remove <code>>/dev/null</code> if you want to see output
Missing errors in logs	Redirect stderr too: <code>2>&1</code>
Command hangs in pipeline	Check whether the upstream command runs continuously and needs manual stop

Related Guides

Use these guides for deeper command coverage and workflow patterns.

tee Command in Linux	Full tee command tutorial
grep Command in Linux	Filter matching lines
sort Command in Linux	Sort text output
tail Command in Linux	Inspect and follow recent lines
head Command in Linux	Show first lines quickly
journalctl Command in Linux	Query and filter systemd logs
Bash Append to File	Append redirection patterns