

NAME

diff - compare files line by line

SYNOPSIS

diff [*OPTION*]... *FILES*

DESCRIPTION

Compare *FILES* line by line.

Mandatory arguments to long options are mandatory for short options too.

--normal

output a normal diff (the default)

-q, --brief

report only when files differ

-s, --report-identical-files

report when two files are the same

-c, -C NUM, --context[=*NUM*]

output *NUM* (default 3) lines of copied context

-u, -U NUM, --unified[=*NUM*]

output *NUM* (default 3) lines of unified context

-e, --ed

output an ed script

-n, --rcs

output an RCS format diff

-y, --side-by-side

output in two columns

-W, --width=*NUM*

output at most *NUM* (default 130) print columns

--left-column

output only the left column of common lines

--suppress-common-lines

do not output common lines

-p, --show-c-function

show which C function each change is in

-F, --show-function-line=*RE*

show the most recent line matching *RE*

--label LABEL

use *LABEL* instead of file name (can be repeated)

-t, --expand-tabs

expand tabs to spaces in output

-T, --initial-tab

make tabs line up by prepending a tab

--tabsize=*NUM*

tab stops every *NUM* (default 8) print columns

--suppress-blank-empty

suppress space or tab before empty output lines

-l, --paginate

pass output through 'pr' to paginate it

- r, --recursive**
recursively compare any subdirectories found
- N, --new-file**
treat absent files as empty
- unidirectional-new-file**
treat absent first files as empty
- ignore-file-name-case**
ignore case when comparing file names
- no-ignore-file-name-case**
consider case when comparing file names
- x, --exclude=*PAT***
exclude files that match *PAT*
- X, --exclude-from=*FILE***
exclude files that match any pattern in *FILE*
- S, --starting-file=*FILE***
start with *FILE* when comparing directories
- from-file=*FILE1***
compare *FILE1* to all operands; *FILE1* can be a directory
- to-file=*FILE2***
compare all operands to *FILE2*; *FILE2* can be a directory
- i, --ignore-case**
ignore case differences in file contents
- E, --ignore-tab-expansion**
ignore changes due to tab expansion
- Z, --ignore-trailing-space**
ignore white space at line end
- b, --ignore-space-change**
ignore changes in the amount of white space
- w, --ignore-all-space**
ignore all white space
- B, --ignore-blank-lines**
ignore changes whose lines are all blank
- I, --ignore-matching-lines=*RE***
ignore changes whose lines all match *RE*
- a, --text**
treat all files as text
- strip-trailing-cr**
strip trailing carriage return on input
- D, --ifdef=*NAME***
output merged file with ‘*#ifdef NAME*’ diffs
- GTYPE-group-format=*GFMT***
format *GTYPE* input groups with *GFMT*
- line-format=*LFMT***
format all input lines with *LFMT*

--LTYPE-line-format=LFMT

format LTYPE input lines with LFMT

These format options provide fine-grained control over the output of diff, generalizing **-D/--ifdef**.

LTYPE is 'old', 'new', or 'unchanged'.

GTYPE is LTYPE or 'changed'.

GFMT (only) may contain:

%< lines from FILE1

%> lines from FILE2

%= lines common to FILE1 and FILE2

%[-][WIDTH][.[PREC]][{doxX}LETTER
printf-style spec for LETTER

LETTERS are as follows for new group, lower case for old group:

F first line number

L last line number

N number of lines = L-F+1

E F-1

M L+1

%(A=B?T:E)

if A equals B then T else E

LFMT (only) may contain:

%L contents of line

%l contents of line, excluding any trailing newline

%[-][WIDTH][.[PREC]][{doxX}n
printf-style spec for input line number

Both GFMT and LFMT may contain:

%% %

%c'C' the single character C

%c'OOO'
the character with octal code OOO

C the character C (other characters represent themselves)

-d, --minimal

try hard to find a smaller set of changes

--horizon-lines=NUM

keep NUM lines of the common prefix and suffix

--speed-large-files

assume large files and many scattered small changes

--help display this help and exit**-v, --version**

output version information and exit

FILES are 'FILE1 FILE2' or 'DIR1 DIR2' or 'DIR FILE...' or 'FILE... DIR'. If **--from-file** or **--to-file** is given, there are no restrictions on FILE(s). If a FILE is '-', read standard input. Exit

status is 0 if inputs are the same, 1 if different, 2 if trouble.

AUTHOR

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REPORTING BUGS

Report bugs to: bug-diffutils@gnu.org

GNU diffutils home page: <<http://www.gnu.org/software/diffutils/>>

General help using GNU software: <<http://www.gnu.org/gethelp/>>

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SEE ALSO

[wdiff\(1\)](#), [cmp\(1\)](#), [diff3\(1\)](#), [sdiff\(1\)](#), [patch\(1\)](#)

The full documentation for **diff** is maintained as a Texinfo manual. If the **info** and **diff** programs are properly installed at your site, the command

info diff

should give you access to the complete manual.