

How to Display a File Without the Hashtag Sign on Linux?

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If you open the configuration file on the Linux Server, you will usually find many comments used in the file, which are started by a hashtag sign (#). This aims to explain a configuration that is under comment. But sometimes you want to see the configuration without having to look at the explanation of the configuration.

Problem

How to display a file without the hashtag sign on Linux?

Solution

For example, I want to see the default configuration file for the fstab file, which is located at **/etc/fstab**, and by default, it will look like the image below:

```
[root@RockyLinux9 etc]# cat fstab
#
# /etc/fstab
# Created by anaconda on Thu Sep 19 07:29:32 2024
#
# Accessible filesystems, by reference, are maintained under '/dev/disk/'.
# See man pages fstab(5), findfs(8), mount(8) and/or blkid(8) for more info.
#
# After editing this file, run 'systemctl daemon-reload' to update systemd
# units generated from this file.
#
/dev/mapper/rl_rockylinux9-root / xfs defaults 0 0
UUID=066eb699-fd9c-45ae-bba8-6c220e767ed7 /boot xfs defaults 0 0
/dev/mapper/rl_rockylinux9-swap none swap defaults 0 0
[root@RockyLinux9 etc]#
```

The fstab file

As far as I know, there are 3 methods to display the file without the hash sign:

1. Using the grep command

To use the grep command, you can use the format below:

```
grep -v '#' filename
```

In this case, type the command below:

```
grep -v '#' /etc/fstab
```

And it will look like the image below:

```
[root@RockyLinux9 etc]# grep -v '#' /etc/fstab
/dev/mapper/r1_rockylinux9-root /          xfs     defaults        0 0
UUID=066eb699-fd9c-45ae-bba8-6c220e767ed7 /boot      xfs     defaults        0 0
/dev/mapper/r1_rockylinux9-swap none      swap    defaults        0 0
[root@RockyLinux9 etc]#
```

Using the grep command

2. Using the sed command

To use the sed command, you can use the format below:

```
sed '/#/d' filename
```

In this case, type the command below:

```
sed '/#/d' /etc/fstab
```

And it will look like the image below:

```
[root@RockyLinux9 etc]# sed '/#/d' /etc/fstab
/dev/mapper/r1_rockylinux9-root /          xfs     defaults        0 0
UUID=066eb699-fd9c-45ae-bba8-6c220e767ed7 /boot      xfs     defaults        0 0
/dev/mapper/r1_rockylinux9-swap none      swap    defaults        0 0
[root@RockyLinux9 etc]#
```

Using the sed command

3. Using the awk command

To use the awk command, you can use the format below:

```
awk '! /#/' filename
```

In this case, type the command below:

```
awk '! /#/' /etc/fstab
```

And it will look like the image below:

```
[root@RockyLinux9 etc]# awk '! /#/' /etc/fstab
/dev/mapper/r1_rockylinux9-root /          xfs     defaults      0 0
UUID=066eb699-fd9c-45ae-bba8-6c220e767ed7 /boot  xfs     defaults      0 0
/dev/mapper/r1_rockylinux9-swap none    swap      defaults      0 0
[root@RockyLinux9 etc]#
```



Using the awk command

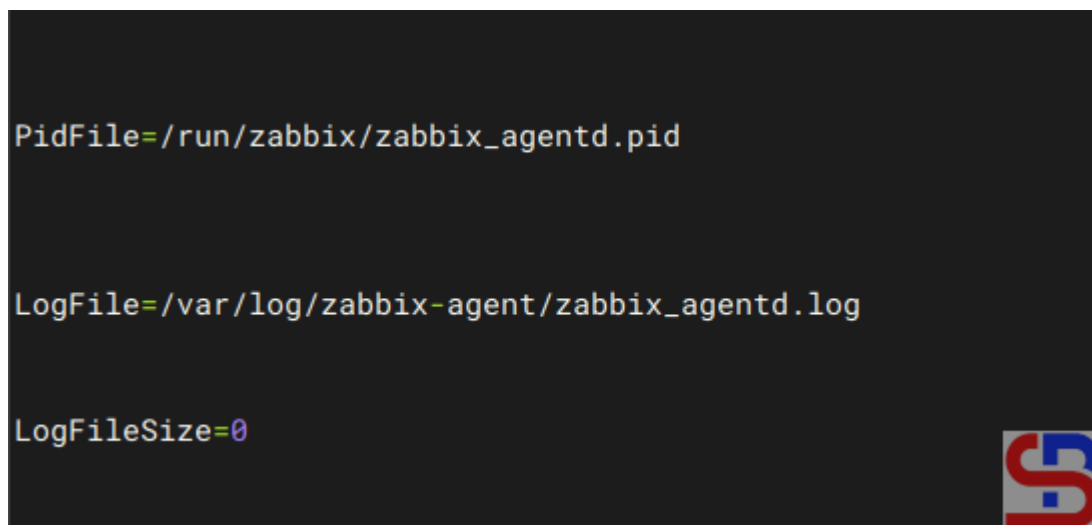
Note

Usually, when you use either of the three commands above to display a sentence that does not start with a hash mark in a Linux file, the result may be a lot of empty spaces, for example, in the zabbix_agentd.conf file, as shown in the image below:

```
PidFile=/run/zabbix/zabbix_agentd.pid

LogFile=/var/log/zabbix-agent/zabbix_agentd.log

LogFileSize=0
```



The initial output

So if you want to only display the results without any blank spaces, then use the command below:

```
grep -v '^#' /etc/zabbix/zabbix_agentd.conf | grep -v '^$'
```

and the result will be as shown in the image below:

```
PidFile=/run/zabbix/zabbix_agentd.pid
LogFile=/var/log/zabbix-agent/zabbix_agentd.log
LogFileSize=0
```



The expected result

If the file comments do not use a hashtag sign, for example, use a semicolon (;), replace the hashtag sign with a semicolon sign in one of the commands above, and it should display a configuration that does not start with the semicolon sign:

```
root@ubuntu2404:~# cat /etc/apache2/sites-available/000-default.conf
<VirtualHost *:80>
    ; The ServerName directive sets the request scheme, hostname and port that
    ; the server uses to identify itself. This is used when creating
    ; redirection URLs. In the context of virtual hosts, the ServerName
    ; specifies what hostname must appear in the request's Host: header to
    ; match this virtual host. For the default virtual host (this file) this
    ; value is not decisive as it is used as a last resort host regardless.
    ; However, you must set it for any further virtual host explicitly.
    ;ServerName www.example.com

    ServerAdmin webmaster@localhost
    DocumentRoot /var/www/html

    ; Available loglevels: trace8, ..., tracel, debug, info, notice, warn,
    ; error, crit, alert, emerg.
    ; It is also possible to configure the loglevel for particular
    ; modules, e.g.
    ;LogLevel info ssl:warn

    ErrorLog ${APACHE_LOG_DIR}/error.log
    CustomLog ${APACHE_LOG_DIR}/access.log combined

    ; For most configuration files from conf-available/, which are
    ; enabled or disabled at a global level, it is possible to
    ; include a line for only one particular virtual host. For example the
    ; following line enables the CGI configuration for this host only
    ; after it has been globally disabled with "a2disconf".
    ;Include conf-available/serve-cgi-bin.conf
</VirtualHost>
root@ubuntu2404:~#
root@ubuntu2404:~#
root@ubuntu2404:~# grep -v ";" /etc/apache2/sites-available/000-default.conf
<VirtualHost *:80>

    ServerAdmin webmaster@localhost
    DocumentRoot /var/www/html

    ErrorLog ${APACHE_LOG_DIR}/error.log
    CustomLog ${APACHE_LOG_DIR}/access.log combined

</VirtualHost>
root@ubuntu2404:~#
```



Using the semicolon sign

References

unix.com

unix.stackexchange.com