

How do I extract certain columns from a text file in Unix?

Somehow I can never remember the *cut* command in Unix. But I occasionally want to remove certain columns from a text file of data. *cut* will do that.

Delimited

Here is a simple tab-delimited example. (Use the `-d` option to set a different column delimiter.)

Data File (tab-delimited)

```
111    222    3333    444    555    666
111    222    3333    444    555    666
111    222    3333    444    555    666
111    222    3333    444    555    666
111    222    3333    444    555    666
```

Command

```
cut -f1,4,6 filename
```

Output

```
111    444    666
111    444    666
111    444    666
111    444    666
111    444    666
```

There are two other examples in the Search and Replace section of this KB article.

<https://kb.ucla.edu/link/117>

More options are available in the Unix man pages for *cut*. Type *man cut*

Fixed Width

Use the `-c` option to select characters based on position.

Data File (fixed width)

```
111 222 3333 444 555 666
111 222 3333 444 555 666
111 222 3333 444 555 666
111 222 3333 444 555 666
111 222 3333 444 555 666
```

Command

```
cut -c9,16 filename
```

Output

```
222
222
222
222
222
```

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