

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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