

**NAME**

look — display lines beginning with a given string

**SYNOPSIS**

```
look [-bdf] [-t termchar] string [file . . .]
```

**DESCRIPTION**

The **look** utility displays any lines in *file* which contain *string* as a prefix.

If *file* is not specified, the file `/usr/share/dict/words` is used, only alphanumeric characters are compared and the case of alphabetic characters is ignored.

The following options are available:

`-b, --binary`

Use a binary search on the given word list. If you are ignoring case with `-f` or ignoring non-alphanumeric characters with `-d`, the file must be sorted in the same way. Please note that these options are the default if no filename is given. See [sort\(1\)](#) for more information on sorting files.

`-d, --alphanum`

Dictionary character set and order, i.e., only alphanumeric characters are compared.

`-f, --ignore-case`

Ignore the case of alphabetic characters.

`-t, --terminate termchar`

Specify a string termination character, i.e., only the characters in *string* up to and including the first occurrence of *termchar* are compared.

**ENVIRONMENT**

The LANG, LC\_ALL and LC\_CTYPE environment variables affect the execution of the **look** utility. Their effect is described in [environ\(7\)](#).

**FILES**

`/usr/share/dict/words`            the dictionary

**EXIT STATUS**

The **look** utility exits 0 if one or more lines were found and displayed, 1 if no lines were found, and >1 if an error occurred.

**COMPATIBILITY**

The original manual page stated that tabs and blank characters participated in comparisons when the `-d` option was specified. This was incorrect and the current man page matches the historic implementation.

**look** uses a linear search by default instead of a binary search, which is what most other implementations use by default.

The `-a` and `--alternative` flags are ignored for compatibility.

**SEE ALSO**

[grep\(1\)](#), [sort\(1\)](#)

**HISTORY**

A **look** utility appeared in Version 7 AT&T UNIX.

**BUGS**

Lines are not compared according to the current locale's collating order. Input files must be sorted with LC\_COLLATE set to 'C'.