NAME

fold — break lines

SYNOPSIS

fold [**-sb**] [**-w** *idth*] [*file*]...

DESCRIPTION

Breaks lines from *file*s (standard input stream if "**-**", the default) such that they do not go past the **-w**th column (byte if **-b**), into to the standard output stream.

Unless **-b**, tabs are stopped every **8**th column, backspaces rewind by one column, and carriage returns rewind to the first column.

Multi-byte character sequences, according to the current locale, are never interrupted; invalid ones are taken to have null width.

OPTIONS

-s, **--spaces**   Break after the last blank on a line if possible.
-b, **--bytes**   Each character has a width equal to its length in bytes, instead.
-w, **--width**=*columns* Limit lines to no more than this many columns (bytes if **-b**). Default: **80**.

EXIT STATUS

1 if a *file* couldn't be opened or read.

EXAMPLES

```
$ echo '☹ ąęćźń' │ fold -w4    $ echo '☹ ąęćźń' │ fold -bw4
☹ ąę                           ☹
ćźń                            ąę
                               ćź
                               ń
```

```
$ cat form
Groceries for February:
    Bananas    3.5kg      $4.51
    Kiwis      2kg        $3.19     Call Siegfried to explain short!
    Bread                 $20.21
```

```
$ fold -w20 form                $ fold -sw20 form
Groceries for Februa            Groceries for
ry:                             February:
    Bananas    3.5kg                Bananas
     $4.51                      3.5kg      $4.51
    Kiwis      2kg                  Kiwis       2kg
     $3.19       Call                $3.19      Call
Siegfried to explain            Siegfried to
 short!                         explain short!
    Bread                           Bread
     $20.21                          $20.21
```

SEE ALSO

fmt(1), paste(1), iswblank(3), mbrtowc(3), wcwidth(3)

STANDARDS

Conforms to IEEE Std 1003.1-2024 ("POSIX.1"); specifying **-w** shorter than any input character is explicitly undefined — this implementation behaves as if each occupied an entire line.

HISTORY

Appeared with a fully-formed baseline semantic in 1 BSD as `fold`(VI):

fold [−width] [file ...]

With single-byte unit-width characters, and **0** *width*s, including a null argument, allowed and inserting extra newlines before each output byte.

4.3 BSD−Reno sees present-day **−w** *width* in addition to the legacy *−width* format, scrubbed from documentation.

The 1 BSD version is included (but, seemingly, unused) as part of the **vi** distribution in AT&T System III UNIX et al.; AT&T System V Release 4 UNIX copies it as an installed command with an update to also handle **−w**.

IEEE Std 1003.2-1992 ("POSIX.2") specifies locale behaviour and creates **−sb**, as present-day.