

NAME**paste** — merge lines**SYNOPSIS**

```
paste [-z] [-d delimiters] [file]...
paste -s [-z] [-d delimiters] [file]...
```

DESCRIPTION

Without **-s**, concatenates consecutive lines of *files* (standard input stream if "-", the default), separating them with tabs, until all are exhausted; otherwise concatenates each *file* in turn.

OPTIONS

-s, --serial Concatenate the entirety of each *file* in turn.
-z, --zero-terminated Input and output lines are terminated by NULs, not newlines.
-d, --delimiters=*list* A list of delimiters to use instead of the tab, used circularly for each output line.

Each character corresponds to itself as a delimiter, except the following escapes are recognised:

\b, \t, \n, \v, \f, \r	The backspace, tab, line feed, vertical tab, form feed, and carriage return characters, respectively.
\\	Backslash.
\0	The empty string.
\anything	<i>anything</i>

Defaults to "\t". Empty *list* is equivalent to "\0". Characters are parsed according to the current locale; invalid multi-byte sequences are ignored.

EXIT STATUS

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

EXAMPLES

List directory in four columns:

```
$ ls | paste - - - -
a      a.c      a.cpp    a.out
fips151-1.pdf  paste    paste.1  paste.cpp
paste.o paste.ps
```

Combine pairs of lines:

```
$ seq 10 | paste -sd '\t\n' -
1      2
3      4
5      6
7      8
9      10
```

STANDARDS

Conforms to IEEE Std 1003.1-2024 ("POSIX.1"). **-z**, allowing no *files*, **-d** escapes other than **\n**, **\t**, **\0**, and ****, and empty *delimiters* are extensions, also present on the GNU system.

HISTORY

Appeared, fully formed, as `paste(1)`:

`paste` – merge same lines of several files or subsequent lines of a file
in CB-UNIX, later part of AT&T System III UNIX, written by Gottfried W. R. Luderer, in-or-before November of 1978. The implementation notes:

```
/* paste: concatenate corresponding lines of each file in parallel (GWRL) */
/*      (-s option: serial concatenation like old (127's) paste command */
but no evidence of a paste from 127 (AT&T's Computer Science Research division) exists in earlier
systems.
```

It was standardised verbatim in IEEE Std 1003.2-1992 ("POSIX.2"), and appears in 4.3BSD-Reno.