

The **Loh**-Down on LaTeX

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In our first-week classes on Athena (6/25) and LaTeX (6/26), Andy Kositsky and I mentioned some important information that either wasn't included in the lecture slides or could have been emphasized more. Here's a short summary of the **essential** commands you ought to have at your fingertips when working with the computers this summer, regardless of whether or not you're planning to use Linux or LaTeX in the future.

1 LaTeX

The trick to using LaTeX is to memorize a small handful of important commands and symbols, and know how to get help when you forget them. Google is a good resource; some other resources can be found on the RSI website.

The good news is that you don't actually need to know that much about LaTeX in order to work on your MiniPaper (or the Final Paper at the end of RSI). You don't need to remember a whole lot about the `documentclass`, `usepackage`, etc., commands that we talked about in the introductory computer classes, because the work has already been done for you. Here's what you **do** need to know in order to edit your MiniPaper/Final Paper:

- Navigate to the MiniPaper (Paper) directory and edit each file separately. You'll be working primarily with `abstract.tex`, `biblio.tex`, `cover.tex`, and `preamble.tex`. You may also need to use `appa.tex` and `preample.tex` for your final paper. But do NOT edit `main.tex`! In order to edit a file, say `paper.tex`, type “`emacs paper.tex &`”.
- After editing the files in Emacs, be sure to save them (remember, the two asterisks should disappear!). Then go to the *terminal*, and in the command line, type “`pdflatex main.tex`”. Make sure you're in the directory which contains the files (this directory will either be `~/MiniPaper` or `~/Paper`).

A few things might happen...

- *When you return to your terminal from Emacs, you've lost your command line.* You probably forgot to type the “`&`” when you

were opening your original file. You can either close Emacs and reopen it again, this time with the `&`, or open a new terminal (prompt). If you use the second method, be sure to navigate back to the directory `MiniPaper` or `Paper` before typing `pdflatex` again.

- After typing “`pdflatex ...`”, you get a “?” rather than getting back your command line. Either type “x” and then press enter, or do the usual “panic-sequence”: `C-z`, `C-x`, `C-c`. One of those should work, and you’ll get back your command line. If you look carefully at the error messages in the terminal, you should be able to see the line(s) that caused the error. They’ll appear right before the ?, and look something like `1.42` (line 42). If you return to your file in the Emacs window, you can locate the implicated line and try to figure out what is wrong (the line numbers are listed on the right side of the gray bar at the bottom of the Emacs window, and you should scroll until you see “L42”).
 - You get back the command line, but notice that there are “*LaTeX Warnings.*” This is most likely because you recently added some citations or references to sections within your paper. Try typing “`pdflatex main.tex`” a few more times, and see if the warnings disappear.
- Once you’ve cleared up any errors resulting from the `pdflatex` command, you’re ready to view your paper. Type “`acroread main.pdf &`” in the terminal window. Be sure to close the old version of the file first, if you already have a copy open on your desktop. (The file won’t automatically refresh.)
 - If you’ve made changes to a file and know you haven’t forgotten to save it, yet the changes haven’t appeared, you may want to try closing the Adobe Acrobat window and retyping the `acroread` command.