journalctl cheat sheet

Filter systemd logs precisely instead of scrolling forever – everyday journalctl commands, searchable and copyable in one click.

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Basics

Show the last 100 lines

```
journalctl -n 100
```

Follow new entries live (like tail -f)

```
journalctl -f
```

Show newest entries first

```
journalctl -r
```

Jump to the end with explanations (after failures)

```
journalctl -xe
```

Write output to a file without pager

```
journalctl --no-pager -n 500 > journal.txt
```

Units & processes

Show logs of a systemd unit

```
journalctl -u nginx
```

Follow a unit's logs live

```
journalctl -u nginx -f
```

Show several units interleaved

```
journalctl -u nginx -u php8.3-fpm --since "10 min ago"
```

Entries from a specific process (PID)

```
journalctl _PID=1234
```

Entries from a user (UID 33 = www-data)

```
journalctl _UID=33
```

Filter by syslog identifier

```
journalctl -t sshd
```

List all units present in the journal

```
journalctl -F _SYSTEMD_UNIT
```

Boots & kernel

List all stored boots with index

```
journalctl --list-boots
```

Logs since the current boot

```
journalctl -b
```

Errors from the previous boot (after a crash)

```
journalctl -b -1 -p err
```

Kernel messages only (like dmesg)

```
journalctl -k
```

Look for OOM killer events in the last boot

```
journalctl -k -b -1 | grep -i -E 'oom|killed process'
```

Time, priority & search

Entries from the last hour

```
journalctl --since "1 hour ago"
```

Narrow down an exact time window

```
journalctl --since "2026-10-01 08:00" --until "2026-10-01 12:00"
```

A unit's logs from yesterday

```
journalctl -u nginx --since yesterday --until today
```

Only errors and worse since boot

```
journalctl -p err -b
```

Priority range warning to error

```
journalctl -p warning..err --since today
```

Search by pattern (regex, case-insensitive)

```
journalctl -u sshd -g "Failed password"
```

Output formats

Message text only, no timestamp or host

```
journalctl -u nginx -o cat
```

Entries with all fields as JSON

```
journalctl -u nginx -o json-pretty -n 5
```

ISO timestamps in UTC (for tickets)

```
journalctl -o short-iso --utc -n 50
```

Journal maintenance

Show journal disk usage

```
journalctl --disk-usage
```

! Delete archived logs older than 2 weeks

```
sudo journalctl --vacuum-time=2weeks
```

! Shrink archived logs to 500 MB

```
sudo journalctl --vacuum-size=500M
```

Rotate active journal files (before vacuum)

```
sudo journalctl --rotate
```

Check journal files for corruption

```
sudo journalctl --verify
```