

UNIX / LINUX SHELL - THE SELECT LOOP

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The **select** loop provides an easy way to create a numbered menu from which users can select options. It is useful when you need to ask the user to choose one or more items from a list of choices.

Syntax

```
select var in word1 word2 ... wordN
do
    Statement(s) to be executed for every word.
done
```

Here *var* is the name of a variable and **word1** to **wordN** are sequences of characters separated by spaces (words). Each time the **for** loop executes, the value of the variable *var* is set to the next word in the list of words, **word1** to **wordN**.

For every selection, a set of commands will be executed within the loop. This loop was introduced in **ksh** and has been adapted into **bash**. It is not available in **sh**.

Example

Here is a simple example to let the user select a drink of choice –

[Live Demo](#)

```
#!/bin/ksh

select DRINK in tea cofee water juice appe all none
do
    case $DRINK in
        tea|cofee|water|all)
            echo "Go to canteen"
            ;;
        juice|appe)
            echo "Available at home"
            ;;
        none)
            break
            ;;
        *) echo "ERROR: Invalid selection"
            ;;
    esac
done
```

The menu presented by the select loop looks like the following –

```
$. ./test.sh
1) tea
2) cofee
3) water
4) juice
5) appe
6) all
7) none
#? juice
Available at home
#? none
$
```

You can change the prompt displayed by the select loop by altering the variable PS3 as follows –

```
$PS3 = "Please make a selection => " ; export PS3
$./test.sh
1) tea
2) cofee
3) water
4) juice
5) appe
6) all
7) none
Please make a selection => juice
Available at home
Please make a selection => none
$
```