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# WHAT IS A REDIRECTION OPERATOR?

A **redirection operator** is a special character that can be used with a command, like a **Command Prompt** command or DOS command, to either redirect the input to the command or the output from the command.

By default, when you execute a command, the input comes from the keyboard and the output is sent to the **Command Prompt** window. Command inputs and outputs are called **command handles**.

The table below lists all of the available redirection operators for commands in **Windows** and **MS-DOS**. However, the `>` and `>>` redirection operators are, by a considerable margin, the most commonly used.

Redirection Operator	Explanation	Example
<code>&gt;</code>	The greater-than sign is used to send to a file, or even a printer or other device, whatever information from the command would have been displayed in the Command Prompt window had you not used the operator.	<code>assoc &gt; types.txt</code>
<code>&gt;&gt;</code>	The double greater-than sign works just like the single greater-than sign but the information is appended to the end of the file instead of overwriting it.	<code>ipconfig &gt;&gt; netdata.t</code>
<code>&lt;</code>	The less-than sign is used to read the input for a command from a file instead of from the keyboard.	<code>sort &lt; data.txt</code>
<code> </code>	The vertical pipe is used to read the output from one command and use it for the input of another.	<code>dir   sort</code>

**NOTE:** Two other redirection operators, `>&` and `< &`, also exist but deal mostly with more complicated redirection involving command handles.

**TIP:** The **clip** command is worth mentioning here as well. It's not a redirection operator but it is intended to be used with one, usually the vertical pipe, to redirect the output of the command before the pipe to the **Windows Clipboard**. For example, executing `ping 192.168.1.1 | clip` will copy the results of the ping command to the clipboard, which you can then paste into any program.