

# gnuplot FAQ

This document deals with **gnuplot**

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## 0 Meta – Questions

### 0.1 Where do I get this document?

The newest version of this document is on the web at [www.gnuplot.info/faq/](http://www.gnuplot.info/faq/).

### 0.2 Where do I send comments about this document?

Send comments, suggestions etc via email to the developer mailing list [gnuplot-beta@lists.sourceforge.net](mailto:gnuplot-beta@lists.sourceforge.net). Please contribute your suggestions with respect to the file `faq.tex` available from [gnuplot.cvs.sourceforge.net/viewvc/gnuplot/faq/](http://gnuplot.cvs.sourceforge.net/viewvc/gnuplot/faq/).

Extensive on-line help

T<sub>E</sub>X-like text formatting for labels, titles, axes, data points

Interactive command line editing and history (most platforms)

#### **1.4 Is gnuplot suitable for scripting?**

Yes. Gnuplot can read in files containing additional commands during an interactive session, or it can be run in batch mode by piping a pre-existing file or a stream of commands to stdin. Gnuplot is used as a back-end graphics driver by such higher-level mathematical packages as Octave, and can easily be wrapped in a cgi script for use as a web-driven plot generator.

#### **1.5 Can I run gnuplot on my computer?**

**Gnuplot** is in widespread use on many platforms, including MS Windows, linux, unix, and OSX. The current source code retains supports for older systems as well, including VMS, Ultrix, OS/2, MS-DOS, BeOS, and

## 2.2 Where can I get gnuplot?

The best place to start is [www.gnuplot.info](http://www.gnuplot.info)

a quick reference summary sheet for T<sub>E</sub>X only

The documentation is built during installation if you have L

```
gnuplot> plot [-6:6] sin(x)
gnuplot> set terminal postscript
Terminal type set to 'postscript'
Options are 'landscape monochrome "Courier" 14'
gnuplot> set output "sin.ps"
gnuplot> replot
gnuplot> set output          # set output back to default
gnuplot> set terminal x11    # ditto for terminal type
```

### 3.4 How do I edit or post-process a gnuplot graph?

This depends on the terminal type you use.

X11 toolkits: You can use the terminal type `fig` and use the **xfig** drawing program to edit the plot afterwards. You can obtain the xfig program from its web site [www.xfig.org](http://www.xfig.org). More information about the text-format used for fig can be found in the fig-package.

You may use the `tgif` terminal, which creates output suitable for reading within `tgif` (<http://bourbon.usc.edu/tgif/>), an interactive 2-D drawing tool under X11.

You may use the `svg` terminal (scalable vector graphics), which can be further edited by a svg editor, e.g. **Inkscape** ([www.inkscape.org](http://www.inkscape.org)), **Skencil** ([www.skencil.org](http://www.skencil.org)) or **Dia** ([projects.gnome.org/dia/](http://projects.gnome.org/dia/)), or loaded into **OpenOffice.org** with an on-fly conversion into OO.o Draw primitives.

PostScript or PDF output can be edited directly by tools such as Adobe Illustrator or Acrobat, or can be converted to a variety of other editable vector formats by the **pstoedit** package. Pstoedit is available at [www.pstoedit.net](http://www.pstoedit.net).

The `mif` terminal type produces an editable FrameMaker document.



```
gnuplot> unset table
```

### 3.12 How to draw black contour plot, and contours with labels

Well, it is very simple even though it is hard to discover: `unset clabel`.

```
set contour both; set cntr levels 100
```

```
unset clabel
```

```
unset surface
```

```
splot x*y with line lt -1
```

```
pause -1
```

```
splot x*y with line palette
```

Another solution requires to write contours into a temporary file using `set table`.

```
set contour base; set cntrparam levels 15; unset surface; set view map
```

```
splot x*x+y*y; pause -1
```

```
splot x
```



#### 4.3 Does gnuplot have hidden line removal?

Yes.

#### 4.4 Does gnuplot support bar-charts/histograms/boxes?

Various clustered and stacked histogram styles are supported in **gnuplot** version 4.2 and later as separate style types.

#### 4.5 Does gnuplot support pie charts?

It's sort of difficult in **gnuplot**, see <http://gnuplot-tricks.blogspot.com/2009/08/pie-charts-entirely-in-gnuplot.html>, or have a look at [www.usf.uni-osnabrueck.de/~breiter/tools/piechart/piecharts.en.html](http://www.usf.uni-osnabrueck.de/~breiter/tools/piechart/piecharts.en.html).

#### 4.6 Does gnuplot quarterly time charts?

It's not possible in **gnuplot**



#### 4.18 How do I replot multiplot drawing

You cannot directly: gnuplot supports `replot` command, not `remultiplot`. You have to write the complete sequence of commands since `set multiplot` till `unset multiplot` into a script file. Then you can load the script into gnuplot as many times as you need for replotting the drawing to different terminals or output files.

### 5 Miscellaneous



## 5.9 I want to help in developing the next version of gnuplot. What can I do?

Join the **gnuplot** beta test mailing list by sending a mail containing the line `subscribe gnuplot-beta` in the body (not the subject) of the mail to





6.11 How do I produce blank output page?

## 7.2 Gnuplot is not plotting any points under X11! How come?

On VMS, you need to make several symbols:

