

FAQ and Troubleshooting Guide: Common Issues

The downside to R is that it doesn't communicate well when expressing why you got an error-- only that you got an Error.

There can be multiple options for solving one error and the single solution that eventually applies to that one problem can also apply to several other problems.

When you get an error, follow this checklist before escalating the issue to the forums or via Google.

Help! My command isn't working!

Did you spell the command wrong?

Did you use the wrong case?

`help()`, `Help()`, and `HELP()` are three different functions (and only the first one will work)

Did you forget to use quotation marks when they are needed?

`install.packages("gclus")` will work, while `install.packages(gclus)` will generate an error.

Did you forget to include the parentheses in a function call?

`help()` rather than `help`. Even if there are no options, you still need the `()`.

Did you use the `\` in a path name on Windows?

R sees the backslash character as an escape character.

`setwd("c:\mydata")` will generate an error. Use `setwd("c:/mydata")` or `setwd("c:\\mydata")` instead

Did you call a function from a package that is not yet loaded?

The function `str_trim()` is contained in the `stringr` package.

If you try to use it before loading the package, you will get an error

I think my package isn't loading correctly. I'm getting warnings or errors.

Sometimes, packages depend on other packages to work correctly

If it says a package is missing, install it and then install the one that caused the error

Sometimes there's a conflict because two packages you've loaded have the same function. Whichever package is loaded last is the function that will take priority over the other one.

To specify a specific package for a function, precede the code with `nameofpackage::`

For example, if `filter()` isn't working, then try `dplyr::filter()` in your code

I'm getting an error in `file(file, "rt")` : cannot open the connection. In addition: Warning message: cannot open file 'what.csv': No such file or directory

Your file isn't where R thinks it is

Check `getwd()` to see if the file you're trying to access is in that directory that R thinks it should look?

If not, use `setwd()` to point to the correct directory or go through the menu `Session > Set Working Directory > Choose Directory`

Is the file name spelled correctly?

Run `ls()` to get a list of the files in the working directory and see if that file matches what's listed.

Sometimes it's as simple as a capital letter when it shouldn't.

R working directory doesn't work ideally with unzipped folders

Make sure if you extract a zip, you move the folder to your computer and not just a temporary folder

Objects, including column names, need to be one word

Space won't be interpreted correctly unless in the context of strings, so it must be surrounded by quotation marks

To deal with columns that have spaces, you use the backtick ``` next to the 1 button on your keyboard. so referencing column name on a dataframe called `temp` will be `temp`column name``

I'm getting a Warning in the console after running a command

Sometimes unfixable, sometimes worth fixing

As long as it doesn't mess up your data (for example, sometimes the warning that some items were replaced with NA is okay, and sometimes it's horrible)

Warning message: package 'whatever' was built under R version 3.x.x

Make sure you have the latest version of R and RStudio installed

The R or RStudio app is not installing on my Mac. What can I do?

Mac users may need to alter their security preferences to allow apps authored by non-Apple developers to install. If you notice an error, try to change

[Play Video] <https://youtu.be/xFpVqkyXFy4>

I'm getting an error in install.packages: object `what` not found

You've either misspelled the package name or forgot to put quotes around the package name

What's with the weird phrase in the Console when I start R?

OK, every version of release for R references a different Peanuts comic strip or film. Previous versions were called:

You Stupid Darkness

Kite Eating Tree

Other ways to find solutions

Search for your question on StackOverflow or on Google

I've found answers to so many of my questions thanks to others who have encountered the same problem as me

If you can't find a solution after Googling it, shoot it out to the #rstats community on Twitter

You'll probably get a response that might solve your problem and maybe a GIF reaction for the heck of it

If it's a problem related to a package, track down the GitHub repo for it and submit a question to the contributors

Sometimes your issue might be something that will help lead to a fix that improves the experience for all other users

I've found that R package creators are very responsive on GitHub and even Twitter with questions