How can I import a text file as a string using the -R command?

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The -R command in programming languages allows for the importing of a text file as a string. This means that the contents of the text file will be read and stored as a single string variable, rather than being separated into individual lines or words. This can be useful for manipulating or analyzing large amounts of text data. To use the -R command, one must specify the path or file name of the text file to be imported. Once imported, the string can be accessed and used in the program as needed. This command is commonly used in data processing and analysis tasks, and provides a convenient way to work with text files in a programming environment.

How to read or import data from a text file as a character string in R? R provides several ways to do so but one thing you need to remember is that loading large files of data into a string will result in memory issues hence, keep this in mind.

1. Quick Examples

Following are quick examples of different ways to read or import a text file into a string variable.

```
# Quick Examples

# Read text file into string
file_str <- paste(readLines("/users/admin/file.txt"), collapse="n")

# Using readr package
library(readr)
file_str <- read_file("/users/admin/file.txt")

# Read Text File as String
text_file <- '/users/admin/file.txt'
file_str = readChar(text_file, file.info(text_file)$size)
```

2. Read Text File into String

To read or load the content of the text file into a string variable use the below approach. Use collapse='n' to collapse all lines into a single line. This approach works well for compressed files as well.

```
# Read text file into string
file_str <- paste(readLines("/users/admin/file.txt"), collapse="n")
```

3. Using readr Package

If you are working with larger files, you should use the `read_file()` function `readr` package. `readr` is a third-party library hence, in order to use `readr` library, you need to first install it by using `install.packages('readr')`. Once installation completes, load the `readr` library in order to use this `read_file()` method. To load a library in R use `library("readr")`.

```
# Using readr package
library(readr)
file_str <- read_file("/users/admin/file.txt")
```

4. Using readChar() Function

This allocates the memory with the size of the file and then loads it into a variable. This is the least preferred option.

```
# Read Text File as String
text_file <- '/users/admin/file.txt'
file_str = readChar(text_file, file.info(text_file)$size)
```

5. Conclusion

In this article, you have learned how to read or load the content of a text file into a string variable in R. For faster performance, use read_file() from readr package.

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References