

# How to Use the source Function in R (With Example)

Authored by  
**stats writer**

November 29, 2025

## RECOMMENDED CITATION

stats writer (2025). *How to Use the source Function in R (With Example)*.  
PSYCHOLOGICAL SCALES. Retrieved from <https://scales.arabpsychology.com/?p=101798>

The `source()` function in R allows users to run a script from inside another script. This is useful for reusing code, as the `source()` function allows you to run a series of commands from an external file. To use the `source()` function in R, you need to specify the file path and name of the script you would like to run as the first parameter. An example of this would be to use the `source("my_script.R")` command to run the "my\_script.R" file.

You can use the **source** function in R to reuse functions that you create in another R script.

This function uses the following basic syntax:

```
source("path/to/some/file.R")
```

Simply add this line to the top of your R script and you'll be able to use any functions defined in **file.R**.

The following example shows how to use the **source** function in practice.

### Example: Using the source Function in R

Suppose we have the following R script called **some\_functions.R** that contains two simple user-defined functions:

```
#define function that divides values by 2
```

```
divide_by_two <- function(x) {  
  return(x/2)  
}
```

```
#define function that multiplies values by 3
```

```
multiply_by_three <- function(x) {  
  return(x*3)  
}
```

Now suppose we're currently working with some R script called **main\_script.R**.

Assuming **some\_functions.R** and **main\_script.R** are located within the same folder, we can use `source` at the top of our **main\_script.R** to allow us to use the functions we defined in the **some\_functions.R** script:

```
source("some_functions.R")
```

```
#create data frame
```

```
df <- data.frame(team=c('A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E', 'F'),
points=c(14, 19, 22, 15, 30, 40))

#view data frame
df

team points
1 A 14
2 B 19
3 C 22
4 D 15
5 E 30
6 F 40

#create new columns using functions from some_functions.R
df$half_points <- divide_by_two(df$points)

df$triple_points <- multiply_by_three(df$points)

#view updated data frame
df

team points half_points triple_points
1 A 14 7.0 42
2 B 19 9.5 57
3 C 22 11.0 66
4 D 15 7.5 45
5 E 30 15.0 90
6 F 40 20.0 120
```

Notice that we're able to create two new columns in our data frame using functions that we defined in the **some\_functions.R** script.

The **source** function allowed us to use the **divide\_by\_two** and **multiply\_by\_three** functions in our current script, even though these functions weren't created in the current script.

**Note:** In this example, we only used one **source** function at the top of the file. However, we can use as many **source** functions as we'd like if we want to reuse functions defined in several different scripts.