Basic UNIX Commands

The UNIX operating system has evolved into quite a monster. The number of commands is large, however, one can operate quite well by just becoming familiar with a few of them. One frustrating factor in learning UNIX is that there are several flavors of UNIX and each has its own peculiarities. The following instructions are fairly basic and should be found on most UNIX boxes.

passwd	Allows the user to change their password.
man	Manual listing of a command. This is UNIX's HELP.
clear	Clears the Screen.
ls	Lists the files in the current directory. ls -l gives a long listing.
mkdir	Makes a new directory within the current directory.
cd	Changes the current directory.
pwd	Tells you your current directory.
cat	Lists the contents of a text file to the screen (conCATenate to the screen).
vi	Lists the contents of a text file to the screen one page at a time.
cp	Copies one file into another file. cp file1 file2.
mv	Moves one file to another (really is a rename but can cross directories).
rm	Removes a file. Since UNIX recognizes wildcards (*) rm * is dangerous!
vi/vim	The standard UNIX editor.
nano	Another editor
ps	List active processes on this system.
chmod	Changes the permissions associated with files.
mail	Method for sending mail locally or on the internet.
talk	Allows one user to "talk" to another.
echo	Displays characters to the screen.
who	Tells you who is logged on this system.
finger	A more elaborate "who" command.
sleep	Makes your login shell sleep for a specified period of time.
grep	Searches for strings within files.
cut	Cuts fields out of files (i.e. column 3).
paste	Pastes files together side by side.
sed	Stream editor.

Here are a few commands which are useful within a Shell Script Program:

shift	In Shell programs, this allows you to look at the next argument.
case	A selection of choices is made possible.
while	A looping structure.
for	A looping structure.
if	A conditional statement for making choices.
read	Allows input into a variable.