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Subject: Random Access Text (like getline)  
Posted by [lefsky](#) on Tue, 22 Jun 2004 22:03:29 GMT  
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I am looking for way to randomly access a text file, as getline will do in python. Essentially, getline will allow you to access any line in a text file by giving it the line number in the file (e.g. getline(100)). I can't see a way to do that with a text file in IDL....

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Subject: Antw: Random Access Text (like getline)  
Posted by [Harald Jeszenszky](#) on Thu, 24 Jun 2004 07:23:47 GMT  
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Hi Michael,

The following code reads consecutive blocks of text lines until the choosen text line number is contained in the block. To change the performance you can fiddle around with the buffer size (variable bufSize) but the given value of 100 is a good starting point.

Regards,  
Harald

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```
FUNCTION getline, file, lineNum, ERROR=error

  CATCH, error
  IF (error NE 0) THEN BEGIN
    MESSAGE, !ERROR_STATE.MSG, /CONTINUE
    IF (N_ELEMENTS(unit) NE 0) THEN $
      FREE_LUN, unit
    RETURN, "
  ENDIF

; check parameters

IF (N_PARAMS() NE 2) THEN $
  MESSAGE, 'Missing parameter.', /NONAME

lineNum = LONG(lineNum)
IF (lineNum LT 1) THEN $
  MESSAGE, 'Line number starts from 1.', /NONAME

; read blocks of text lines
```

```
bufSize = 100L
lineBuf = STRARR(bufSize)
lineCnt = 0L

OPENR, unit, file, /GET_LUN
ON_IOERROR, END_OF_LOOP
WHILE (NOT EOF(unit)) AND (lineCnt LT lineNum) DO BEGIN
  READF, unit, lineBuf
END_OF_LOOP:
  lineCnt = lineCnt + (FSTAT(unit)).TRANSFER_COUNT
ENDWHILE
ON_IOERROR, NULL
FREE_LUN, unit

; return text line

IF (lineCnt LT lineNum) THEN $
  MESSAGE, 'End of file reached.', /NONAME

RETURN, lineBuf[(lineNum - 1) MOD bufSize]

END ; getline
```

```
;-----
```

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>>> Michael Lefsky<lefsky@cnr.colostate.edu> 23.06.04 00:03:29 >>>
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