

RedirectMatch Examples: How to Use Apache RedirectMatch for Clean URL Redirects

If you're working with Apache and need to redirect URLs based on patterns, `RedirectMatch` is your friend. It combines the simplicity of the `Redirect` directive with the power of regular expressions.

Below are real-world `RedirectMatch` examples you can use right now—along with explanations, tips, and answers to related questions like when to use 301 vs 302 and how redirects differ from rewrites.

Real RedirectMatch Examples (Copy and Paste Ready)

Copy

```
# Redirect a single page
RedirectMatch 301 ^/old-page$ /new-page

# Redirect everything under /blog/ to /articles/
RedirectMatch 301 ^/blog/(.*)$ /articles/$1

# Redirect /products or /products/ to /store/
RedirectMatch 301 ^/products/?$ /store/

# Temporary redirect
RedirectMatch 302 ^/temporary/?$ /new-temp/

# Complex pattern with two variables
RedirectMatch 301 ^/category/(.*)/item/(.*)$ /shop/$1/$2
```

- 301 means permanent (good for SEO)
- 302 means temporary (used for short-term changes)
- The pattern is a regular expression matched against the request URI

A Path vs. a URL

When using `RedirectMatch` in your `.htaccess` file, you're matching the **path** portion of the URL—not the full URL.

For example:

- **Full URL:** `https://example.com/old-page`
- **Path:** `/old-page`

The regular expression in `RedirectMatch` is applied to just the path. So don't include `https://` or your domain in the match pattern—only what comes after the slash.

How to Use RedirectMatch

The syntax looks like this:

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```
RedirectMatch [status] [regex pattern] [destination]
```

For example:

Copy

```
RedirectMatch 301 ^/old-page$ /new-page
```

This means: “Permanently redirect anyone visiting `/old-page` to `/new-page`.”

You can use regex groups like `(.*)` to match and re-use parts of the original URL in the destination path.

RedirectMatch vs Redirect vs RewriteRule

- **Redirect:** Simple, non-regex match. Great for single-page redirects.
- **RedirectMatch:** Uses regular expressions to handle multiple similar URLs with one line.
- **RewriteRule:** Used in `mod_rewrite`, offers the most power (can do internal rewrites, add conditions, etc.)

Use `RedirectMatch` when you want simple but flexible pattern-based redirects without getting into full rewrite logic.

Understanding Regular Expressions in RedirectMatch

`RedirectMatch` uses regular expressions (regex) to match URLs. If you’ve never used regex before, here’s what you need to know – and “string” means a string of characters, or in this case, a URL usually:

- `^` means “start of the string”
- `$` means “end of the string”
- `.` matches any single character
- `*` means “zero or more of the previous character”
- `(.*)` matches *everything* between slashes (and saves it as a group you can reuse)
- `$1`, `$2`, etc. refer to matched groups in the destination URL
- `?` after a character makes it optional (e.g. `/?$` matches with or without a trailing slash)

Example:

Copy

```
RedirectMatch 301 ^/blog/(.*)$ /articles/$1
```

This means: “Take whatever comes after `/blog/` and redirect it to `/articles/` with that same slug.”

So `/blog/my-post` **becomes** `/articles/my-post`.

If regex still feels confusing, start small. Even just knowing `^`, `$`, and `(.*)` will get you 90% of the way there for basic redirect rules.

Free Download: Regular Expressions Cheat Sheet (PDF)

Here’s a cheat sheet you can download (no email required) to have as a handy reference for working with regular expressions and RedirectMatch.

[Regular Expressions / RedirectMatch Cheat Sheet](#)

How to Tell If a URL Is a Redirect

There are a few ways to check:

- Use the terminal: `curl -I https://example.com/old-page`
- Look for a `301` or `302` status in browser dev tools (Network tab)
- Use online tools like httpstatus.io to check live URLs

What to Put in a Redirect URL?

The destination URL can be:

- A relative path: `/new-page`
- A full URL: `https://example.com/new-page`

Use relative paths for internal redirects. Use full URLs if redirecting to a different domain.

What Is Considered a Redirect?

A redirect is a response that tells the browser to go to a different URL. This can be:

- **301:** Permanent redirect (good for SEO)

- **302:** Temporary redirect
- **307/308:** Special-purpose redirects
- **Meta refresh:** Client-side redirect via HTML (not recommended)

What Is a Redirect URL Example?

Here's a real example using `RedirectMatch`:

Copy

```
RedirectMatch 301 ^/blog$ /articles
```

This redirects visitors from `/blog` to `/articles`. Simple and effective.

What Is an Open Redirect URL Example?

An open redirect allows external input to control the redirect destination. For example:

Copy

```
/go.php?url=https://badsite.com
```

If this page redirects users without validating the URL, it can be abused for phishing or malware. Always sanitize input and avoid generic redirect scripts unless they're locked down.

What Is the Difference Between Redirect and Forwarding a URL?

- **Redirect:** The user's browser is sent to a new URL (visible to them).
- **Forward:** The server fetches another page and shows it without changing the URL in the browser.

Use redirects for SEO and clear URL transitions. Use forwarding for behind-the-scenes routing (usually handled with `RewriteRule`).

What Is the Best Redirect Method?

For SEO and most use cases, a **301 redirect** is best. It tells search engines the change is permanent and passes link authority. Use **302** for short-term moves or testing.

Avoid 307 or JavaScript-based redirects unless you have a specific reason. Stick with 301/302 for clean, reliable behavior.

Final Thoughts

If you manage an Apache-based website, `RedirectMatch` is one of the easiest ways to redirect groups of URLs using patterns. It's more powerful than `Redirect`, easier than `RewriteRule`, and perfect for SEO, content restructuring, or website cleanup.

Use it wisely, test thoroughly, and double-check your patterns. A good redirect saves SEO equity—a bad one can break your site.

And:

- Don't forget to visit my [Redirect Examples Using .htaccess](#) page.
- If you like the copy buttons on this page, check out my [WordPress Code Copy Button Plugin](#).

Got questions? Drop them below.

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