When you invoke GNU CC, it normally does preprocessing, compilation, assembly and linking. The ``overall options" allow you to stop this process at an intermediate stage. For example, the option says not to run the linker. Then the output consists of object files output by the assembler.

Other options are passed on to one stage of processing. Some options control the preprocessor and others the compiler itself. Yet other options control the assembler and linker most of these are not documented here, since you rarely need to use any of them. Most of the command line options that you can use with GNU CC are useful for C programs when an option is only useful with another language (usually C++), the explanation says so explicitly. If the description for a particular option does not mention a source language, you can use that option with all supported languages.