

Vim Cheatsheet

By Dejan Panovski • Updated on Jan 12, 2026 •

Quick reference for Vim text editor commands

Vim is a powerful modal text editor that comes pre-installed on most Linux systems. This cheatsheet covers essential commands for navigating, editing, searching, and managing files in Vim. Master these commands to dramatically increase your editing speed.

Modes

Switch between Vim’s different editing modes.

i	Insert mode (before cursor)
I	Insert at line beginning
a	Insert mode (after cursor)
A	Insert at line end
o	New line below
O	New line above
Esc	Return to Normal mode
v	Visual mode
V	Visual line mode
Ctrl+v	Visual block mode

Save & Quit

Save files and exit the editor.

:w	Save file
:w filename	Save as filename
:q	Quit
:q!	Quit without saving
:wq	Save and quit
:x	Save and quit
ZZ	Save and quit
zQ	Quit without saving

Navigation

Move around the file efficiently.

<code>h</code>	Move left
<code>j</code>	Move down
<code>k</code>	Move up
<code>l</code>	Move right
<code>w</code>	Next word
<code>b</code>	Previous word
<code>e</code>	End of word
<code>0</code>	Line beginning
<code>\$</code>	Line end
<code>^</code>	First non-blank char

Jump Around

Navigate to specific locations quickly.

<code>gg</code>	Go to first line
<code>G</code>	Go to last line
<code>5G</code>	Go to line 5
<code>:5</code>	Go to line 5
<code>Ctrl+f</code>	Page down
<code>Ctrl+b</code>	Page up
<code>Ctrl+d</code>	Half page down
<code>Ctrl+u</code>	Half page up
<code>%</code>	Jump to matching bracket
<code>H</code>	Top of screen
<code>M</code>	Middle of screen
<code>L</code>	Bottom of screen

Delete

Remove text from the file.

x	Delete character
X	Delete char before cursor
<u>dd</u>	Delete line
D	Delete to line end
dw	Delete word
d\$	Delete to line end
d0	Delete to line start
dG	Delete to file end
dgg	Delete to file start
5dd	Delete 5 lines

Copy & Paste

Yank (copy) and put (paste) text.

<u>yy</u>	Yank (copy) line
yw	Yank word
y\$	Yank to line end
5yy	Yank 5 lines
<u>ggVG</u>	Select all lines
p	Paste after cursor
P	Paste before cursor
"*y	Yank to system clipboard
"*p	Paste from clipboard
"+y	Yank to clipboard (X11)
"+p	Paste from clipboard (X11)

Undo & Redo

Reverse and repeat changes.

<u>u</u>	Undo
U	Undo line changes
Ctrl+r	Redo
.	Repeat last command

Search

Find text in the file.

<u>/pattern</u>	Search forward
?pattern	Search backward
n	Next match
N	Previous match
*	Search word under cursor
#	Search backward for word
:noh	Clear search highlight

Find & Replace

Search and replace text patterns.

<u>:s/old/new/</u>	Replace first on line
:s/old/new/g	Replace all on line
:%s/old/new/g	Replace all in file
:%s/old/new/gc	Replace with confirm
:5,10s/old/new/g	Replace in lines 5-10

Visual Mode

Select and manipulate text blocks.

v	Start visual mode
V	Select lines
Ctrl+v	Select block
y	Yank selection
d	Delete selection
>	Indent selection
<	Unindent selection
~	Toggle case
u	Lowercase
U	Uppercase

Indentation

Adjust text indentation.

>>	Indent line
<<	Unindent line
5>>	Indent 5 lines
=	Auto-indent
gg=G	Auto-indent entire file
:set tabstop=4	Set tab width
:set expandtab	Use spaces for tabs

Line Numbers

Display and navigate with line numbers.

<code>:set number</code>	Show line numbers
:set nu	Show line numbers
:set nonumber	Hide line numbers
:set relativenumber	Relative line numbers
:set rnu	Relative line numbers

Multiple Files

Work with multiple files and buffers.

:e filename	Open file
:bn	Next buffer
:bp	Previous buffer
:bd	Close buffer
:ls	List buffers
:sp filename	Horizontal split
:vsp filename	Vertical split
Ctrl+w w	Switch window
Ctrl+w q	Close window
:tabnew	New tab
gt	Next tab
gT	Previous tab

Marks

Set and jump to bookmarks.

<code>ma</code>	Set mark 'a'
<code>'a</code>	Jump to mark 'a'
<code>`a</code>	Jump to exact position
<code>:marks</code>	List all marks
<code>''</code>	Jump to last position
<code>`.</code>	Jump to last edit

Macros

Record and replay command sequences.

<code>qa</code>	Start recording to 'a'
<code>q</code>	Stop recording
<code>@a</code>	Play macro 'a'
<code>@@</code>	Replay last macro
<code>5@a</code>	Play macro 5 times

Settings

Configure Vim behavior.

<code>:set ignorecase</code>	Case insensitive search
<code>:set smartcase</code>	Smart case search
<code>:set hlsearch</code>	Highlight search
<code>:set incsearch</code>	Incremental search
<code>:set wrap</code>	Wrap long lines
<code>:set nowrap</code>	Disable line wrapping
<code>:syntax on</code>	Enable syntax colors
<code>:set paste</code>	Paste mode (no indent)