Vi is a very popular editor for Unix. To people who haven’t used or seen it, it can be intimidating. It is uses key input from the keyboard and does not use the mouse. In this tutorial I will go over the basic commands that will help start your training in VI.

To start off we will go over some basic stuff. To start up VI, just type in vi. To exit out of it you have multiple options. First you need to be in command mode and then you can use commands like:

:x Exit, saving changes

:q Exit as long as there have been no changes

ZZ Exit and save changes if any have been made

:q! Exit and ignore any changes.

So that’s starting and exiting but you need to be able to put in content. For that you need to push “i” to go into insert mode that will allow you to type in your code. you will probably end up using most of your time in command mode.

With command mode you will move about your code to delete, copy, and paste. Some simple movement keys to use are:

h Move left

j Move down

k Move up

l Move right

Those are just some simple commands that you will use at the beginning of the code, but as you work on some bigger codes that are 100 of lines then you will need nG. the little n is a number. So, if you put 50G then you will go to line 50.

Codes can be the same text through most of the lines with very few differences. You wouldn’t want to type everything out again so you would copy and paste. To select a character, its “v” but to select a whole line its “V”. From there you can either press d to cut or y to copy. From there you just need to find where you wish to paste and push “P” to paste before cursor, and “p” to paste after.

Something to help if you use the same configurations for your codes would be to set a up a .exrc. It will run so that you don’t have to do the same thing repeatedly with variables.

This is just a quick guide and there is more to learn.