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Turn on or off color syntax highlighting in vi or vim

Posted by [Vivek Gite](#) <vivek@nixcraft.com>This entry is part 2 of 10 in the series [VI / VIM Text Editor](#) ^[1][VI / VIM Text Editor](#) ^[1]

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Q. How do I turn on or off color syntax highlighting in vi or vim text editor under UNIX or Linux?

A. Vim or vi is a text editor. It can be used to edit all kinds of plain text. It is especially useful for editing programs or UNIX/Linux configuration files.

^[11]

Task: Turn on color syntax highlighting

Open file (for example file.c):

```
$ vi file.c
```

Now press ESC key, type : syntax on

```
:syntax on
```

Task: Turn off color syntax highlighting

To turn it back off, press ESC key, type : syntax off

```
:syntax off
```

You can edit ~/.vimrc file and add command syntax on to it so that next you will start vim with color syntax highlighting option

```
$ cd
$ vi .vimrc
```

Append the following line:

```
syntax on
```

Save and close the file.

C source code editing while syntax highlighting is on in vi or vim:

```
#include <stdio.h>
main()
{
    int x;
    printf("Enter value for x : ");
    scanf("%d",&x);
}
```

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