

Playwright Inspector

Debugging Tests

The Playwright Inspector is a GUI tool to help you debug your Playwright tests. It allows you to step through your tests, live edit locators, pick locators and see actionability logs.

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What is Playwright Inspector ?

- Playwright Inspector is a built-in debugging and test exploration tool provided by Playwright.
- It helps testers pause execution, inspect elements visually, step through actions, and generate reliable locators while tests are running.

In simple words:

- Playwright Inspector is an interactive debugger for Playwright tests.

Why Playwright Inspector Exists

Modern web apps are dynamic and fast.
Traditional debugging (logs + waits) is
slow and error-prone.







Playwright Inspector allows you to:

- See what Playwright sees
- Debug flaky tests
- Create stable locators
- Understand auto-wait behavior

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Key Features of Playwright Inspector

Feature	What it does
 Pause execution	Stops test at a specific step
 Step through actions	Execute one command at a time
 Element inspection	Hover to highlight elements
 Auto locator generation	Suggests best selectors
 Code recording	Generates Playwright code
 Logs & errors	Shows runtime messages

How to Open Playwright Inspector (Java)

Using `page.pause()` (Most Reliable)

```
page.pause();
```

- Pauses execution
- Opens Inspector immediately

```
Page page1 = page.waitForPopup() -> {  
    page.click(...);  
});  
page.pause();
```

Reason

- `waitForPopup()` must contain only popup-triggering action
- `pause()` is for debugging, not popup detection

Using PWDEBUG Environment Variable

- Powershell commands
- `set PWDEBUG=1`
- `mvn test`
- Runs tests in debug mode
- Inspector opens automatically

Using IDE Debug Mode

- Run test in Debug
- Combine with `PWDEBUG=1`

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Execution Flow (Very Important)

Click "Go to website"



New tab opens



Playwright captures popup



Returns Page → page1



Execution pauses



Inspector opens

What You See in Inspector

- Browser window (real app)
- Inspector panel:
 - Step / Resume buttons
 - Locator suggestions
 - DOM tree
 - Console logs

Locator Generation (Big Advantage)

Inspector suggests user-centric locators:

```
page.getByRole(AriaRole.BUTTON,  
  new Page.GetByRoleOptions().setName("Login"));
```

- ✓ More stable than XPath
- ✓ Better accessibility alignment

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Playwright Inspector vs Selenium Debugging

Aspect	Selenium	Playwright Inspector
Built-in debugger	✗	✓
Auto locator suggestions	✗	✓
Visual element highlighting	✗	✓
Step execution	Manual	One-click
Debugging speed	Slower	Faster