

# Basic Vi Commands

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The vi text editor has three modes namely

1. **Writing mode:**
2. **command mode:**
3. **command line mode:**

When vi editor is opened, it has a command mode. In order to go to writing mode, one can press **a** or **i** for entering text. **<Esc>** key is used to go back to vi command mode. In order to enter from vi command mode into the vi command line mode, you can type **:. <Esc>** key will bring you back to normal command mode. Some basic commands of vi editor are listed below.

## 1. How to start vi editor:

- **vi** opens vi editor environment.
- **vi myfile** creates or opens the file named **myfile** starting at line 1.
- **vi -r myfile** recovers **myfile** that was being edited when system crashed.
- **<Esc>** changes the writing environment of vi into command mode.

## 2. How to quit vi editor:

- **:w! <return> (enterkey)** saves the changes.
- **:q! <return> (enterkey)** quits the file without saving changes to exit from the editor.
- **:wq! <return>** first saves the changes and then quits the file to exit from the editor.
- **:x <return>** also quits vi editor saving the changes.
- **:ZZ** also exits from vi environment saving the changes.
- **:w! myfile <return>** If the vi editor is opened but it has been given no any file name then one uses this command to save the file as **myfile**.

## 3. Moving the Cursor in vi editor:

- **w** moves the cursor at the beginning of the next word.
- **b** moves the cursor back at the beginning of the previous word.

- **h** or **->** moves the crusor forward .
- **l** or **<-** moves the crusor backward .
- **j** or **<return (enter) >** or **↓** moves the crusor downward.
- **k** or **↑** moves the crusor downward.
- **O** moves the crusor at the starting of the current line
- **\$** moves the crusor at the end of the current line.
- **:0<return>** or **1G** moves the crusor at the start of the first line.
- **:n<return>** or **nG** moves the crusor at the start of the *nth* line.
- **:\$<return>** or **G** moves the crusor at the start of the last line.
- **:f<return>** or **<CTRL>G** displays the current file and the number of current line at the end of the screen

#### 4. Inserting text in vi editor:

- **i** means insert before cursor. After typing **i**, you can insert text before cursor, until **<Esc>** hit.
- **I** means insert at the beginning of line.
- **a** means append after cursor. After typing **a**, you can insert text after cursor, until **<Esc>** hit.
- **A** means append at the end of the line.
- **o** means open a line below. This command opens and put text in a new line below current line, until **<Esc>** hit.
- **O** means line above. This command opens and put text in a new line below current line, until **<Esc>** hit.
- **s** means substitute a character.
- **S** means substitute eintire line

#### 5. Changing text in vi editor:

- **r**: After typing **r**, you can replace a single character under the cursor.no need to hit **<Esc>**.
- **R**: After typing **R**, you can replace characters starting with current with the letter under the cursor until you hit **<Esc>**.
- **cc**: After typing **cc**, change (replace) the current entire line, stops when you hit **<Esc>**.
- **C**: After typing **C**, change (replace) the characters in the current line, until you hit **<Esc>**.
- **u**: **u** is used to undo your last action on the vi editor.
- **<CTRL>r**: **<CTRL>r** is used to redo the changes which were undone.

#### 6. Deleting text in vi editor:

- **x** deletes a single character under the cursor.no need to hit **<Esc>**.
- **dw** deletes a word, no need to hit **<Esc>**.
- **dd** deletes entire line, no need to hit **<Esc>**.

- **ddd** deletes n lines, no need to hit **<Esc>**.
- **D** deletes the remainder of the line starting with the cursor.

#### 7. Copying and pasting the text:

- **yy** copies the current line.
- **nyy** copies n lines including the current line.
- **p** puts and paste the copied line after the line where the cursor is.

#### 8. Moving and manipulating the screen of vi editor:

- **<CTRL>f** scrolls the screen n times forward(downward).
- **<CTRL>b** scrolls the screen n times backward(upward).
- **<CTRL>d** scrolls the screen n times downward(forward).
- **<CTRL>u** scrolls the screen n times upward(backward).

#### 9. Searching and replacing some text or string in vi editor:

- **:/nextWord<return>** search forward the occurrence of the next **nextWord** and puts the cursor at the starting of the next word.
- **:?nextWord<return>** search backward the occurrence of the next **nextWord** and puts the cursor at the starting of the previous word.
- **n** moves the cursor to next occurrence of search string in the same direction of the search.
- **N** moves the cursor to next occurrence of search string in the opposite direction of the search.
- **:s/word1/word2/g<return>** replaces all occurrences of “word1” with “word2” on current line.
- **:%s/word1/word2/g<return>** replaces all occurrences of “word1” with “word2” in whole data.
- **:1,\$s/word1/word2/g** can also be used to make global substitution of word1 by word2.
- **:%s/love//g<return>** removes the word “love” from the whole data.
- **:%s/"/"/g<return>** removes the sign ” from the whole data.
- **:/^The** searches for the next line that starts with “The”, for example, “The”, “Then”, “There”.
- **/^The \>** searches for next line that starts with the word “The”.
- **/END\$** searches next line that ends with the word “END”.

#### 10. List of some other important commands of in vi editor:

- **:** is used to invoke an ex command.
- **:set nu <return>** will number all the lines of the text.

- `:set nonu <return>` will turn off the line number of the text.
- `:↑` brings the old ex commands at the executive position.
- `J` is used to join two lines.
- `/` is used to search forward for pattern.
- `?` is used to search backward for pattern.
- `:.= <return>` returns line number of current line at bottom of the screen.
- `:=<return>` returns the total number of lines at bottom of the screen.

