

Starting vi

You may use vi to open an already existing file by typing

`vi filename,` where "filename" is the name of the existing file.

Or you may create a new file by typing

`vi newname,` where "newname" is the name you wish to give the new file.

Entering Text

In order to begin entering text in this empty file, you must change from command mode to insert mode. To do this, type

`i`

Moving the Cursor

The cursor is controlled with four keys: h, j, k, l.

Key	Cursor Movement
---	-----
h	left one space
j	down one line
k	up one line
l	right one space

Deleting Characters

To delete a character from a file, move the cursor until it is on the incorrect letter, then type

`x`

The character under the cursor disappears. To remove four characters (the one under the cursor and the next three) type

`4x`

To delete the character before the cursor, type

`X` (uppercase)

Deleting Words

To delete a word, move the cursor to the first letter of the word, and type

`dw`

This command deletes the word and the space following it.

To delete three words type

`3dw`

Deleting Lines

To delete a whole line, type

`dd`

The cursor does not have to be at the beginning of the line. Typing `dd` deletes the entire line containing the cursor and places the cursor at the start of the next line. To delete two lines, type

`2dd`

To delete from the cursor position to the end of the line, type

`D` (uppercase)

Replacing Characters

To replace one character with another:

1. Move the cursor to the character to be replaced.
2. Type `r`
3. Type the replacement character.

The new character will appear, and you will still be in command mode.

Replacing Words

To replace one word with another, move to the start of the incorrect word and type

`cw`

The last letter of the word to be replaced will turn into a `$`. You are now in insert mode and may type the replacement. The new text does not need to be the same length as the original. Press `<Esc>` to get back to command mode. To replace three words, type

`3cw`

Replacing Lines

To change text from the cursor position to the end of the line:

1. Type C (uppercase).
2. Type the replacement text.
3. Press <Esc>.

Inserting Text

To insert text in a line:

1. Position the cursor where the new text should go.
2. Type i
3. Enter the new text.

The text is inserted BEFORE the cursor.

4. Press <Esc> to get back to command mode.

Appending Text

To add text to the end of a line:

1. Position the cursor on the last letter of the line.
2. Type a
3. Enter the new text.

This adds text AFTER the cursor.

4. Press <Esc> to get back to command mode.

Opening a Blank Line

To insert a blank line below the current line, type

o (lowercase)

To insert a blank line above the current line, type

O (uppercase)

Undoing

To undo your most recent edit, type

u

To undo all the edits on a single line, type

U (uppercase)

Undoing all edits on a single line only works as long as the cursor stays on that line. Once you move the cursor off a line, you cannot use U to restore the line.

Moving Around in a File

There are shortcuts to move more quickly through a file. All these work in command mode.

Key	Movement
---	-----
w	forward word by word
b	backward word by word
\$	to end of line
0 (zero)	to beginning of line
H	to top line of screen
M	to middle line of screen
L	to last line of screen
G	to last line of file
1G	to first line of file
<Control>f	scroll forward one screen
<Control>b	scroll backward one screen
<Control>d	scroll down one-half screen
<Control>u	scroll up one-half screen

Moving by Searching

To move quickly by searching for text, while in command mode:

1. Type / (slash).
2. Enter the text to search for.
3. Press <Return>.

The cursor moves to the first occurrence of that text.

To repeat the search in a forward direction, type

n

To repeat the search in a backward direction, type

N

Closing and Saving a File

With vi, you edit a copy of the file, rather than the original file. Changes are made to the original only when you save your edits.

To save the file and quit vi, type

ZZ

The vi editor is built on an earlier Unix text editor called ex. ex commands can be used within vi. ex commands begin with a : (colon) and end with a <Return>. The command is displayed on the status line as you type. Some ex commands are useful when saving and closing files.

To save the edits you have made, but leave vi running and your file open:

1. Press <Esc>.
2. Type :w
3. Press <Return>.

To quit vi, and discard any changes you have made since last saving:

1. Press <Esc>.
2. Type :q!
3. Press <Return>.