

vi basic commands

Summary of most useful commands

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Entering command mode

[Esc] Exit editing mode. Keyboard keys now interpreted as commands.

Moving the cursor

h (or left arrow key) move the cursor left.
l (or right arrow key) move the cursor right.
j (or down arrow key) move the cursor down.
k (or up arrow key) move the cursor up.
[Ctrl] **f** move the cursor one page forward.
[Ctrl] **b** move the cursor one page backward.
^ move cursor to the first non-white character in the current line.
\$ move the cursor to the end of the current line.
G go to the last line in the file.
nG go to line number *n*.
[Ctrl] **G** display the name of the current file and the cursor position in it.

Entering editing mode

i insert new text before the cursor.
a append new text after the cursor.
o start to edit a new line after the current one.
O start to edit a new line before the current one.

Replacing characters, lines and words

r replace the current character (does not enter edit mode).
s enter edit mode and substitute the current character by several ones.
cw enter edit mode and change the word after the cursor.
C enter edit mode and change the rest of the line after the cursor.

Copying and pasting

yy copy (yank) the current line to the copy/paste buffer.
p paste the copy/paste buffer after the current line.
P Paste the copy/paste buffer before the current line.

Deleting characters, words and lines

All deleted characters, words and lines are copied to the copy/paste buffer.

x delete the character at the cursor location.

dw delete the current word.
D delete the remainder of the line after the cursor.
dd delete the current line.

Repeating commands

. repeat the last insertion, replacement or delete command.

Looking for strings

/string find the first occurrence of *string* after the cursor.
?string find the first occurrence of *string* before the cursor.
n find the next occurrence in the last search.

Replacing strings

Can also be done manually, searching and replacing once, and then using **n** (next occurrence) and **.** (repeat last edit).

n,ps/str1/str2/g between line numbers *n* and *p*, substitute all (g: global) occurrences of *str1* by *str2*.
1,\$s/str1/str2/g in the whole file (\$: last line), substitute all occurrences of *str1* by *str2*.

Applying a command several times - Examples

5j move the cursor 5 lines down.
30dd delete 30 lines.
4cw change 4 words from the cursor.
1G go to the first line in the file.

Misc

[Ctrl] **l** redraw the screen.
J join the current line with the next one
u undo the last action

Exiting and saving

ZZ save current file and exit vi.
:w write (save) to the current file.
:w file write (save) to the *file* file.
:q! quit vi without saving changes.

Going further

vi has much more flexibility and many more commands for power users! It can make you extremely productive in editing and creating text.

Learn more by taking the quick tutorial: just type **vimtutor**.

