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# 130+ Essential Vim Commands

by Jean-Baptiste Jung MVB · Aug. 15, 13 · Agile Zone · Not set

## Heads up...this article is old!

Technology moves quickly and this article was published **5 years ago**. Some or all of its contents may be outdated.

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Since the 70's, vi and vim are very popular text editors among programmers. 5 years ago, I wrote an article named “100 vim commands every programmer should know” and here is a reworked, updated version. Enjoy!

## Basics

:e filename	Open <i>filename</i> for edition
:w	Save file
:q	Exit Vim
:q!	Quit without saving
:x	Write file (if changes has been made) and exit
:sav filename	Saves file as <i>filename</i>
.	Repeats the last change made in normal mode
5.	Repeats 5 times the last change made in normal mode

## Moving in the file

k or Up Arrow	move the cursor up one line
j or Down Arrow	move the cursor down one line

20	move cursor to column 20.
%	Move cursor to matching parenthesis
[[	Jump to function start
[[	Jump to block start

## Cut, copy & paste

y	Copy the selected text to clipboard
p	Paste clipboard contents
dd	Cut current line
yy	Copy current line
y\$	Copy to end of line
D	Cut to end of line

## Search

/word	Search <i>word</i> from top to bottom
?word	Search <i>word</i> from bottom to top
*	Search the word under cursor
^cstring	Search <i>STRING</i> or <i>string</i> , case insensitive
/jo[ha]n	Search <i>john</i> or <i>joan</i>
^< the	Search <i>the</i> , <i>theatre</i> or <i>then</i>
/the\>	Search <i>the</i> or <i>breathe</i>
^< the\>	Search <i>the</i>
^< !,.\>	Search all words of 4 letters
/fred\joe	Search <i>fred</i> but not <i>alfred</i> or <i>frederick</i>
/fred\joe	Search <i>fred</i> or <i>joe</i>
^<\d\d\d\d\>	Search exactly 4 digits
^\\n\{3}	Find 3 empty lines
:bufdo /searchstr/	Search in all open files
bufdo %s/something/somethingelse/g	Search <i>something</i> in all the open buffers and replace it with <i>somethingelse</i>

:5,\$s/old/new/g	Replace all occurrences from line 5 to EOF
:%s/^/hello/g	Replace the beginning of each line by <i>hello</i>
:%s/\$/Harry/g	Replace the end of each line by <i>Harry</i>
:%s/onward/forward/gi	Replace <i>onward</i> by <i>forward</i> , case insensitive
:%s/ *\$//g	Delete all white spaces
:g/string/d	Delete all lines containing <i>string</i>
:v/string/d	Delete all lines containing which didn't contain <i>string</i>
:s/Bill/Steve/	Replace the first occurrence of <i>Bill</i> by <i>Steve</i> in current line
:s/Bill/Steve/g	Replace <i>Bill</i> by <i>Steve</i> in current line
:%s/Bill/Steve/g	Replace <i>Bill</i> by <i>Steve</i> in all the file
:%s/^M//g	Delete DOS carriage returns (^M)
:%s/\r/\r/g	Transform DOS carriage returns in returns
:%s#<[>]+>##g	Delete HTML tags but keeps text
:%s/^(.*)\n\1\$/\1/	Delete lines which appears twice
Ctrl+a	Increment number under the cursor
Ctrl+x	Decrement number under cursor
ggVGg?	Change text to Rot13

## Case

Vu	Lowercase line
VU	Uppercase line
g~~	Invert case
vEU	Switch word to uppercase
vE~	Modify word case
ggguG	Set all text to lowercase
gggUG	Set all text to uppercase
:set ignorecase	Ignore case in searches
:set smartcase	Ignore case in searches excepted if an uppercase letter is used
:%s/^\./\u&/g	Sets first letter of each word to uppercase
:%s/^\./\l&/g	Sets first letter of each word to lowercase

:23r infile	Insert the content of <i>infile</i> under line 23

## File explorer

:e .	Open integrated file explorer
:Sex	Split window and open integrated file explorer
:Sex!	Same as :Sex but split window vertically
:browse e	Graphical file explorer
:ls	List buffers
:cd ..	Move to parent directory
:args	List files
:args *.php	Open file list
:grep expression *.php	Returns a list of .php files contening <i>expression</i>
gf	Open file name under cursor

## Interact with Unix

!pwd	Execute the <i>pwd</i> unix command, then returns to Vi
!!pwd	Execute the <i>pwd</i> unix command and insert output in file
:sh	Temporary returns to Unix
\$exit	Retourns to Vi

## Alignment

:%!fmt	Align all lines
!}fmt	Align all lines at the current position
5!!fmt	Align the next 5 lines

## Tabs/Windows

`:new abc.txt`Edit *abc.txt* in new window

## Window splitting

<code>:e filename</code>	Edit <i>filename</i> in current window
<code>:split filename</code>	Split the window and open <i>filename</i>
<code>ctrl-w up arrow</code>	Puts cursor in top window
<code>ctrl-w ctrl-w</code>	Puts cursor in next window
<code>ctrl-w _</code>	Maximize current window vertically
<code>ctrl-w  </code>	Maximize current window horizontally
<code>ctrl-w =</code>	Gives the same size to all windows
<code>10 ctrl-w +</code>	Add 10 lines to current window
<code>:vsplit file</code>	Split window vertically
<code>:sview file</code>	Same as <b>:split</b> in readonly mode
<code>:hide</code>	Close current window
<code>:nly</code>	Close all windows, excepted current
<code>:b 2</code>	Open #2 in this window

## Auto-completion

<code>Ctrl+n Ctrl+p</code> (in insert mode)	Complete word
<code>Ctrl+x Ctrl+l</code>	Complete line
<code>:set dictionary=dict</code>	Define <i>dict</i> as a dictionary
<code>Ctrl+x Ctrl+k</code>	Complete with dictionary

## Marks

<code>m {a-z}</code>	Marks current position as <i>{a-z}</i>
<code>' {a-z}</code>	Move to position <i>{a-z}</i>
<code>"</code>	Move to previous position

:set smartindent	Turn on intelligent auto-indent
:set shiftwidth=4	Defines 4 spaces as indent size
ctrl-t, ctrl-d	Indent/un-indent in insert mode
>>	Indent
<<	Un-indent
=%	Indent the code between parenthesis
1GVG=	Indent the whole file

## Syntax highlighting

:syntax on	Turn on syntax highlighting
:syntax off	Turn off syntax highlighting
:set syntax=perl	Force syntax highlighting

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