



Install a JSON Formatter Extension for Better Readability



4 min to complete · By Ryan Desmond, Jared Larsen

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In the [previous lesson on JSON](#), you were lucky enough to only encounter formatted JSON, where spacing and indentation help you to understand the structure. You'll be surprised how confusing JSON can become when it's unformatted. To combat this, you should install a JSON formatter extension, which automatically makes JSON received in the browser "pretty".

Unformatted JSON

To demonstrate this using real-world data, go ahead and click the following link. Don't worry, it will open in a new tab:

http://demo.codingnomads.co:8080/tasks_api/tasks?userId=-1&complete=-1

If you don't already have a JSON formatter plugin installed, and you aren't using Firefox, you should see a large block of JSON spanning the full-width of the screen, like in the image below.



Beware, it might give you a headache! Joking aside, this is why JSON formatters exist.



Tip: You can find formatters for just about any programming language or data format out there. Often times, their use is enforced in the workplace to ensure all developers are on the same page stylistically.

Installing a JSON Formatter

There are many browsers out there, and it would be a huge undertaking to explain how to install a JSON formatter for each one. Therefore, this lesson is limited to installing an extension on Google Chrome since Firefox already has one installed. But know that there are plenty of options out there for Safari, Edge, Opera, etc.

Here are the steps:

1. Navigate to the Chrome extension store by using the following URL:

<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/category/extensions?hl=en-US>

2. Search for **JSON Formatter**.
3. Install the extension called "JSON Formatter" created by callumlocke.co.uk (or another if you prefer).
4. Now, reload the page with the previously unformatted JSON data. It should be cleaned up and formatted like in the image below. It's like handing you a bottle of aspirin for that headache.

```
{
  "data": [
    {
      "id": 5,
      "userId": 89,
      "name": "cricket world cup",
      "description": "CW-2019-England",
      "createdAt": 1561859358000,
      "updatedAt": 1561859358000,
      "completed": true
    },
    {
      "id": 6,
      "userId": 89,
      "name": "cricket world cup",
      "description": "CW-2019-England",
      "createdAt": 1561859363000,
      "updatedAt": 1561859363000,
      "completed": true
    },
    {
      "id": 8,
      "userId": 66,
      "name": "gkgkgk",
      "description": "jjfjgvcvcjgg",
      "createdAt": 1561859814000,
      "updatedAt": 1561859814000,
      "completed": false
    },
    {
      "id": 9,
      "userId": 89,
      "name": "kiloedd",
      "description": "ntreewwxass",
      "createdAt": 1561860234000,
      "updatedAt": 1561860234000,
      "completed": false
    },
    {
      "id": 10,
      "userId": 1,
      "name": "string",
      "description": "Bobs task",
      "createdAt": 1567177220000,
      "updatedAt": 1567177220000,
      "completed": true
    },
    {
      "id": 12,
      "userId": 43,
      "name": "Watch Mindhunter Season 2",
      "description": "Better get Netflix-ing",
      "createdAt": 1568205264000,
      "updatedAt": 1568205264000,
    }
  ]
}
```

If you use multiple browsers, it won't hurt to install a JSON formatting extension in each one.



Tip: There are also websites that provide a similar service, but for pasted-in JSON like <https://jsonformatter.org>. These can be extremely helpful as well!

Summary: JSON Formatter Chrome Extension

- When unformatted, JSON can be difficult and confusing to read.
- JSON formatters make JSON human-readable.
- It is highly recommended that you install a JSON formatting extension.

There will be a LOT of JSON in your future! :)

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