

# Convert-Poppler Configuration Documentation

## Overview

Convert-Poppler is a TypeScript utility for converting PDF files to text using the Poppler `pdftotext` command-line tool. It provides extensive configuration options for both the PDF extraction process and post-processing of the extracted text.

## Configuration File Structure

The configuration is provided via a JSON file with the following structure:

```
json
{
  "inputDir": "string",
  "outputDir": "string",
  "processSubDirs": boolean,
  "popplerPath": "string",
  "pdfTextExtractOptions": {},
  "postProcessingOptions": {}
}
```

## Main Configuration Options

### `inputDir` (required)

- **Type:** `string`
- **Description:** Path to the directory containing PDF files to convert
- **Example:** `"C:\\docs\\transcripts\\pdf"`

### `outputDir` (required)

- **Type:** `string`
- **Description:** Path to the directory where converted text files will be saved
- **Example:** `"C:\\docs\\transcripts\\txt"`

### `processSubDirs` (optional)

- **Type:** `boolean`
- **Default:** `false`

- **Description:** When `true`, processes subdirectories one level deep within `inputDir`
- **Behavior:**
  - `false`: Processes PDFs directly in `inputDir`
  - `true`: Processes PDFs in subdirectories of `inputDir`, creating matching subdirectories in `outputDir`

### `popplerPath` (optional)

- **Type:** `string`
- **Default:** Uses system PATH
- **Description:** Directory containing the `pdftotext` executable
- **Example:** `"C:\\Program Files\\poppler\\bin"`

## PDF Text Extract Options

Options passed directly to the `pdftotext` command. Place these in the `pdfTextExtractOptions` object.

### Layout Options

#### `layout` (boolean)

- **Description:** Maintain original physical layout
- **Recommended:** `true` for legal transcripts

#### `simple` (boolean)

- **Description:** Simple one-column page layout

#### `simple2` (boolean)

- **Description:** Simple one-column page layout, version 2

#### `table` (boolean)

- **Description:** Similar to layout, optimized for tables

#### `lineprinter` (boolean)

- **Description:** Use strict fixed-pitch/height layout

#### `raw` (boolean)

- **Description:** Keep strings in content stream order

### **phys** (boolean)

- **Description:** Physical layout mode

## Resolution and Spacing

### **r** (number)

- **Description:** Resolution in DPI (dots per inch)
- **Default:** 72
- **Recommended:** 300 for accurate spacing detection
- **Example:** `"r": 300`

### **fixed** (number)

- **Description:** Assume fixed-pitch (or tabular) text
- **Recommended:** 0 for variable-width fonts
- **Example:** `"fixed": 0`

### **linespacing** (number)

- **Description:** Fixed line spacing for LineePrinter mode
- **Example:** `"linespacing": 1.2`

## Page Selection

### **f** (number)

- **Description:** First page to convert
- **Example:** `"f": 1`

### **l** (number)

- **Description:** Last page to convert
- **Example:** `"l": 10`

## Area Selection

### **x** (number)

- **Description:** X-coordinate of crop area top left corner

### **y** (number)

- **Description:** Y-coordinate of crop area top left corner

**W** (number)

- **Description:** Width of crop area in pixels

**H** (number)

- **Description:** Height of crop area in pixels

## Text Processing

**nodia** (boolean)

- **Description:** Discard diagonal text

**nopgbrk** (boolean)

- **Description:** Don't insert page breaks at end of each page
- **Recommended:** `true` for continuous text

**bbox** (boolean)

- **Description:** Output bounding box information

**bbox-layout** (boolean)

- **Description:** Output bounding box information with layout

**tsv** (boolean)

- **Description:** Output in TSV (Tab-Separated Values) format

## Encoding Options

**enc** (string)

- **Description:** Output text encoding
- **Recommended:** `"UTF-8"`
- **Example:** `"enc": "UTF-8"`

**eol** (string)

- **Description:** End-of-line convention
- **Options:** `"unix"`, `"dos"`, `"mac"`

- **Recommended:** "unix" for consistent line endings
- **Example:** "eol": "unix"

## Security Options

**opw** (string)

- **Description:** Owner password for encrypted files

**upw** (string)

- **Description:** User password for encrypted files

## Post-Processing Options

Options for cleaning and normalizing the extracted text. Place these in the `postProcessingOptions` object.

**fixTranscriptSpacing** (boolean)

- **Default:** false
- **Description:** Fixes common spacing issues in legal transcripts
- **Fixes:**
  - Line numbers touching Q/A markers: "9Q" → "9 Q"
  - Attorney names: "BYMR.SMITH" → "BY MR. SMITH"
  - Time stamps: "9:30a.m." → "9:30 a.m."
  - Page/line references: "page42" → "page 42"

**fixTranscriptQuotes** (boolean)

- **Default:** false
- **Description:** Normalizes quotes and special characters
- **Fixes:**
  - Smart quotes → straight quotes: "''" → ""
  - Em dashes → double hyphens: "—" → "--"
  - En dashes → single hyphens: "-" → "-"
  - Ellipsis character → three dots: "..." → "..."

**normalizeWhitespace** (boolean)

- **Default:** false

- **Description:** Comprehensive whitespace normalization

- **Actions:**

- Replaces multiple spaces with single space
- Removes trailing whitespace from lines
- Ensures consistent spacing after punctuation
- Trims lines

#### **normalizeLineNumberWhitespace** (boolean)

- **Default:** `false`
- **Description:** Removes leading whitespace before line numbers and aligns content
- **Behavior:**
  - Removes spaces before 1-2 digit numbers at start of lines
  - Single-digit line numbers (1-9) get an extra space for alignment
  - Two-digit line numbers (10-99) just have leading spaces removed
  - Preserves lines without line numbers (headers, etc.)
  - Ensures all line numbers occupy 2 character positions (left-justified)

#### **removeBlankLines** (boolean)

- **Default:** `false`
- **Description:** Removes completely blank lines from the output
- **Behavior:**
  - When `true`, filters out lines that contain only whitespace
  - When `false` (default), preserves blank lines for readability
  - Useful for condensing output or maintaining original spacing

## Example Configurations

### Basic Configuration

```
json
```

```
{
  "inputDir": "./pdfs",
  "outputDir": "./txt",
  "pdfTextExtractOptions": {
    "layout": true,
    "r": 300
  }
}
```

## Legal Transcripts with Full Processing

```
json
{
  "inputDir": "C:\\transcripts\\pdf",
  "outputDir": "C:\\transcripts\\txt",
  "processSubDirs": true,
  "pdfTextExtractOptions": {
    "layout": true,
    "r": 300,
    "nopgbrk": true,
    "enc": "UTF-8",
    "eol": "unix",
    "fixed": 0
  },
  "postProcessingOptions": {
    "fixTranscriptSpacing": true,
    "fixTranscriptQuotes": true,
    "normalizeLineNumberWhitespace": true,
    "removeBlankLines": false
  }
}
```

## Custom Poppler Installation

```
json
```

```
{  
  "inputDir": "F:\\docs\\pdf",  
  "outputDir": "F:\\docs\\txt",  
  "popplerPath": "C:\\tools\\poppler-24.07\\bin",  
  "pdfTextExtractOptions": {  
    "layout": true,  
    "r": 300  
  }  
}
```

## Usage

```
bash
```

```
npx ts-node convert-poppler.ts config.json
```

## Tips for Legal Transcripts

1. **Use high resolution:** Set `"r": 300` for accurate spacing detection
2. **Preserve layout:** Use `"layout": true` to maintain structure
3. **Enable line number normalization:** Use `"normalizeLineNumberWhitespace": true` for consistent formatting
4. **Fix spacing issues:** Enable `"fixTranscriptSpacing": true` for Q/A formatting
5. **Use consistent encoding:** Set `"enc": "UTF-8"` and `"eol": "unix"`

## Troubleshooting

- **Missing spaces between columns:** Increase resolution with `"r": 300` or higher
- **Smart quotes in output:** Enable `"fixTranscriptQuotes": true`
- **Inconsistent line numbers:** Enable `"normalizeLineNumberWhitespace": true`
- **Page breaks in output:** Set `"npgbrk": true`
- **Can't find pdftotext:** Specify full path with `"popplerPath"`