



Your cheat sheet for GitHub Copilot CLI commands, syntax, and workflows.

Last updated: 2026-02-02

## Three Interaction Modes

Mode	How to Use	Best For
Interactive	<code>copilot</code>	Exploration, multi-turn conversations, iteration
Plan	<code>/plan</code> or <code>Shift+Tab</code>	Complex tasks, reviewing approach before coding
Programmatic	<code>copilot -p "prompt"</code>	Automation, scripts, CI/CD pipelines

## Essential Slash Commands

### Core Commands

Command	Description
<code>/help</code>	Show available commands
<code>/clear</code>	Clear conversation history
<code>/model</code>	Show or switch AI model
<code>/exit</code>	End the session
<code>/plan</code>	Create implementation plan before coding
<code>/review</code>	Run code-review agent on staged/unstaged changes
<code>/delegate</code>	Hand off task to Copilot coding agent on GitHub
<code>/diff</code>	Review changes made in current directory (experimental)

### Session Management

Command	Description
<code>/session</code>	Show session info and workspace summary
<code>/usage</code>	Display session usage metrics

/context	Show context window token usage
/compact	Summarize conversation to reduce context
/share	Export session as markdown or GitHub gist
/rename	Rename the current session
/resume	Switch to a different session

## Permissions

Command	Description
/allow-all	Auto-approve all permission prompts (use with caution)
/yolo	Alias for /allow-all

## Directory Access

Command	Description
/add-dir <path>	Add a directory to allowed list
/list-dirs	Show all allowed directories
/cwd or /cd	View or change working directory

## Authentication

Command	Description
/login	Log in to GitHub Copilot
/logout	Log out of GitHub Copilot

## Configuration

Command	Description
/theme	View or set terminal theme
/terminal-setup	Enable multiline input support
/user	Manage GitHub accounts
/feedback	Submit feedback to GitHub
/init	Initialize Copilot instructions for repository

---

## @ Syntax for Context

### File References

```
@filename.js          # Single file  
@src/api/users.js    # File with path  
@src/                 # Entire directory  
@src/**/*.ts         # Glob pattern
```

## Multiple Files

```
> @file1.js @file2.js Compare these implementations  
> @src/api/ @tests/ Generate tests for all API endpoints
```

## Best Practices

- Start specific, expand if needed
- Use glob patterns for targeted searches
- Combine files for cross-file analysis

## Built-in Agents

Agent	How to Invoke	Purpose
Plan	/plan or Shift+Tab	Step-by-step implementation plans
Code-review	/review	Focused review of staged/unstaged changes
Explore	Automatic	Codebase analysis (used internally)
Task	Automatic	Tests, builds, lints (success = brief summary, failure = full details)

Use `/agent` to browse and select from your custom agents.

 [Agents Documentation](#)

## Custom Agents

Create `AGENTS.md` or `*.agent.md` files:

```
---  
name: frontend  
description: Frontend specialist with expertise in React and TypeScript  
tools: ["read", "edit", "search"]  
---  
## Frontend Agent  
  
You are a frontend specialist with expertise in React and TypeScript.  
  
**Focus Areas**:  
- Component architecture
```

- Accessibility (WCAG 2.1 AA)
- Performance optimization

 **Required:** The `description` field in YAML frontmatter is required. Other fields like `name`, `tools`, and `target` are optional. Tool aliases: `read`, `edit`, `search`, `execute`, `web`, `agent`.

 **Official docs:** [Custom agents configuration](#)

## Skills System

### Using Skills

Skills are **automatically triggered** based on your prompt matching the skill's description:

```
> Review this code for security issues  
# Your "security-audit" skill activates automatically  
  
> Generate tests for the login function  
# Your "generate-tests" skill activates automatically
```

### Managing Installed Skills

Command	Purpose
<code>/skills list</code>	Show all installed skills
<code>/skills info &lt;name&gt;</code>	Get skill details
<code>/skills add &lt;name&gt;</code>	Enable a skill
<code>/skills remove &lt;name&gt;</code>	Disable a skill
<code>/skills reload</code>	Reload after editing

*Skills trigger automatically when your prompt matches their description - no manual activation needed.*

### Creating Skills

Create `~/.copilot/skills/skill-name/SKILL.md`:

```
----  
name: my-skill  
description: What this skill does and when to use it  
----  
# My Skill
```

Instructions for the skill...

**Required properties:** `name` (lowercase, hyphens), `description`. Optional: `license`.

 [Official docs: About Agent Skills](#)

## MCP Servers

### Common Servers

Server	Purpose
<code>github</code>	Issues, PRs, repositories (included by default)
<code>filesystem</code>	Enhanced file operations
<code>postgres</code>	Database inspection

### Using MCP

```
> Get issue #42 details      # Uses GitHub MCP
> List open PRs             # Uses GitHub MCP
> Create a PR for this branch # Uses GitHub MCP
```

## Plugins

Extend Copilot CLI with community plugins:

Command	Purpose
<code>/plugin list</code>	See installed plugins
<code>/plugin marketplace</code>	Browse available plugins
<code>/plugin install &lt;name&gt;</code>	Install a plugin

## Common Workflows

### Security Review

```
copilot -p "Review @src/auth/ for security vulnerabilities"
```

## Code Review

```
copilot  
> /review # Review staged changes  
> @src/api/users.js Review for security, performance, best practices
```

## Test Generation

```
copilot -p "@src/utils/validation.js Generate Jest tests with edge cases"
```

## Debugging

```
copilot  
> @src/api/payments.js Users report $10.20 + $5.10 shows as $15.299999  
> Debug why this happens
```

## Git Commit Message

```
copilot -p "Generate commit message for: $(git diff --staged)"
```

## PR Description

```
copilot -p "Generate PR description for: $(git log main..HEAD --oneline)"
```

## Model Selection

Model	Best For
claude-sonnet-4.5	Default, balanced
claude-opus-4.5	Complex architecture decisions
gpt-5-mini	Quick tasks (non-premium)
gpt-4.1	Routine code generation (non-premium)

```
> /model claude-opus-4.5 # Switch model  
> /model # See available models
```

## Session Persistence

---

### Save and Resume

```
# Save current session  
> /rename feature-auth  
  
# Later, resume it  
copilot --resume feature-auth  
  
# Or continue last session  
copilot --continue
```

---

## CI/CD Integration

---

### Basic Usage

```
copilot -p "Security review of @$file" --silent >> review.md
```

---

### Pre-commit Hook Example

```
#!/bin/bash  
STAGED=$(git diff --cached --name-only --diff-filter=ACM | grep -E '\.(js|ts)$')  
for file in $STAGED; do  
    copilot -p "Quick security review of @$file - critical issues only"  
done
```

---

## Quick Tips

---

1. Use **-p** for one-off questions - Faster than interactive mode
2. Reference files with **@** - Gives Copilot full context
3. Use **/plan** for complex tasks - Review approach before coding
4. Switch models for different tasks - Opus for architecture, mini for routine
5. Save sessions - Resume work later with full context
6. Use **--silent** in scripts - Cleaner CI/CD output

---

## Keyboard Shortcuts

---

Shortcut	Action
Shift+Tab	Toggle Plan Mode
Ctrl+C	Cancel current operation

<code>Esc</code>	Cancel current input or exit menus
<code>Ctrl+L</code>	Clear the screen
<code>!command</code>	Run shell command directly (e.g., <code>!git status</code> )

---

## Resources

---

- [GitHub Copilot CLI for Beginners Course Repository](#)
  - [GitHub Copilot CLI Docs](#)
  - [MCP Server Registry](#)
- 

*Generated from GitHub Copilot CLI for Beginners course materials.*