

Text Modes

Operation	Keystroke	Function	Note						
Text Modes <ul style="list-style-type: none">Help & CustomizeShow state of text modesToggle special text modessmart-dash modetext whitespace modestext enriched modeDrawing in ASCIIReferences	<p>Emacs support navigation and also search for words and symbols, and the concept of “words” can be modified to include or exclude underscores and hyphens. It supports the following special mode:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">superword-mode that treats words separated by hyphen and underscores as a single entity, useful for programming languages using <code>snake_case</code> like C, C++, Erlang.subword-mode that treats sections of <code>camelCase</code> and <code>PascalCase</code> as distinct words. That is useful when editing portions of these longer symbols.As of Emacs 23.2 the CC Mode <code>c-subword-mode</code> is obsolete and has been replaced by the more general subword-mode.glasses-mode that transforms the way <code>unreadableSymbolsLikeThisOneUsingCamelCase</code> popular in some programming languages into something that some people find more visually pleasing like <code>unreadable_Symbol_like_This_One_Using_Camel_Case</code> using underscores <i>virtual</i> separators. You can use other characters as separators through customization of the glasses customization group.smart-dash-mode (see smart-dash-mode section below). <p>👁️ PEL provides the ability to activate these modes automatically for various major modes by identifying the major modes in the following user option lists:</p> <table><tr><td>pel-modes-activating-superword-mode</td><td>pel-modes-activating-subword-mode</td><td>pel-modes-activating-glasses-mode</td></tr><tr><td>pel-modes-activating-whitespace-mode</td><td>pel-modes-activating-smart-dash-mode</td><td>pel-modes-activating-electric-quote-local-mode</td></tr></table> <p>Emacs also has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Several modes that deal with whitespace.A <code>prettify-symbol-mode</code> where some strings can be replaced by single symbol character.Drawing modes that allow you to draw in text and navigate over “<i>void</i>” space.<ul style="list-style-type: none">Normally you cannot place the cursor after the end of a line. With drawing modes you can place the cursor (point) anywhere in the window.Different way of handling the concept of marking text in a buffer. <p>The commands to control all those are listed in this table, starting with the commands to get help in Emacs and customize these features.</p>			pel-modes-activating-superword-mode	pel-modes-activating-subword-mode	pel-modes-activating-glasses-mode	pel-modes-activating-whitespace-mode	pel-modes-activating-smart-dash-mode	pel-modes-activating-electric-quote-local-mode
pel-modes-activating-superword-mode	pel-modes-activating-subword-mode	pel-modes-activating-glasses-mode							
pel-modes-activating-whitespace-mode	pel-modes-activating-smart-dash-mode	pel-modes-activating-electric-quote-local-mode							
Last updated on:	2025-05-01	See also: 🔍 Search/Replace , 🔍 Whitespace . For drawing, see also: 📄 M Graphviz Dot , 📄 M PlantUML							
Open this PDF file. See also: 🔍 Help/Info	<f11> t m <f1>	(pel-help-pdf &optional OPEN-WEB-PAGE)	Open the 🔍 Text Modes local PDF. If the prefix argument (like C-u or M--) is used, then it opens the remote GitHub hosted raw PDF instead. If the pel-flip-help-pdf-arg user-option is set it’s the other way around.						
🔍 Customize Text Mode support See also: 🔍 Inserting Text <ul style="list-style-type: none">🔍 Filling/Justification	<f11> t m <f2>	(pel-customize-pel &optional OTHER-WINDOW)	Customize PEL cross-reference support: what modes automatically activate superword-mode, subword-mode, auto-fill-mode and smart-dash-mode. Also control keypad special binding. <ul style="list-style-type: none">If OTHER-WINDOW is non-nil (use C-u) , display in other window.						
🔍 Customize Emacs text modes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><f11> t <f3><f11> t m <f3>	(pel-customize-library &optional OTHER-WINDOW)	Customize Emacs text mode related groups: editing-basics, glasses, whitespace.						
🔍 Customize Emacs whitespace management	<f11> t w <f3>	(pel-customize-library &optional OTHER-WINDOW)	Customize Emacs handling of whitespace .						
Show state of text modes <ul style="list-style-type: none">Are hard tabs used for indentation, tab-widthelectric-quote-modedelete-selection-modeenriched-modeoverwrite-modecase foldingsubword, superword, glass modesvisible-mode, smart-dash-modeparagraph definition See also: 🔍 Indentation	<f11> t m ?	(pel-show-text-modes)	Display the state of the various text modes in the mini buffer. Specially useful to see if hard-tabs or spaces are inserted for indentation.						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">When indent-tabs-mode is active, Emacs inserts a number of hard tabs and spaces.<ul style="list-style-type: none">The number of hard tabs instead depends on the amount of characters required for indentation and the tab-width.If indent-tabs-mode is not active, then Emacs inserts only space characters.PEL provides user-options of the form pel-<mode>-use-tabs which is used to initialize the indent-tabs-mode for a buffer in the supported major modes. <pre>-UUU:--- F1 *scratch* All (4,0) (Lisp Interaction WK Anzu LY Fly/-- ^ ElDoc Fill) 12:16 1.42 ----- - Local newline does align : void . Automatically activated by modes (<f11> t a <f2>): (c-mode c++-mode sh-mode) - Local electric-quote-mode: off , electric-quote-local-mode: not loaded. - whitespace-mode : not loaded, show-trailing-whitespace : off , indicate-empty-lines: off. - enriched-mode : not loaded. - overwrite mode : off , delete-selection-mode : off. - case-fold-search : on , sort-fold-case : not loaded. - subword mode : off , superword mode : on , glass-mode: not loaded. - visible-mode : off , smart-dash-mode : not loaded. - Sentences end with 2 space characters. - paragraph-start : "^L\\ []*\$" - paragraph-separate: "[^L]*\$"</pre>								
Switch Insert/Overwrite mode See also: 📄 Numkeypad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><Esc><insert><Esc><kp-0><f11> t o<f11> `	(overwrite-mode &optional ARG)	Toggles the overwrite mode on/off <ul style="list-style-type: none">With a prefix argument ARG, enable Overwrite mode if ARG is positive, and disable it otherwise.The <insert> key is not available in macOS keyboards where it registers as <kp-0> instead, but it’s the same key on the numeric keypad: the numeric keypad 0 key.⚠️ In some situations, like when when using Emacs on a Linux host accessed through ssh, the <Esc><kp-0> may not work. Try setting pel-keypad-esc-0-is-overwrite-mode to t.						
	<f11> t o	(nhexl-overwrite-only-mode &optional ARG)	Minor mode where text is only overwritten: Insertion/deletion is avoided where possible and replaced by overwriting existing text, if needed with ‘nhexl-overwrite-clear-byte’. 📦 Requires the nhexl-mode package. 🔄 PEL activates it if pel-use-nhexl user option is t.						
Binary file overwrite only mode. 🐉 nhexl mode must be activated to edit in binary.	<f11> t o	(nhexl-overwrite-only-mode &optional ARG)	Minor mode where text is only overwritten: Insertion/deletion is avoided where possible and replaced by overwriting existing text, if needed with ‘nhexl-overwrite-clear-byte’.						
Make Info control text visible/invisible (toggle visible mode)	<f11> t m v	(visible-mode &optional ARG)	Toggle making all invisible text temporarily visible (Visible mode). With a prefix argument ARG, enable Visible mode if ARG is positive, and disable it otherwise.						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Useful for editing info files, where some characters are not visible by default.Same in Org-mode (for example to show everything, or to show the syntax of links without expanding anything).								
Toggle subword-mode See also: 🔍 Search/Replace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><f11> t m b	(subword-mode &optional ARG)	Toggle subword-mode: a minor mode that treats sections of <code>camelCase</code> and <code>PascalCase</code> as distinct words. With a ARG > 0: enable subword-mode mode , ARG < 0 : disable it.						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><f12> M-bM-<f12> M-b		<ul style="list-style-type: none">PEL provides the <f12> M-b key for the programming language modes where <code>camelCase</code> and <code>PascalCase</code> are popular.						
Toggle superword-mode See also: 🔍 Search/Replace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><f11> t m p	(superword-mode &optional ARG)	Toggle superword-mode: a minor mode that treats <code>snake_case</code> as one word. In Lisp, ‘-’ and ‘_’ are treated part of words. With a ARG > 0: enable superword mode , ARG < 0 : disable it.						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><f12> M-pM-<f12> M-p		<ul style="list-style-type: none">PEL provides the <f12> M-p key for the programming language modes where <code>snake_case</code> is popular (Emacs Lisp, C, C++, Erlang, Python, etc…)						
Toggle glasses-mode <ul style="list-style-type: none">See Making CamelCase Readable with Glasses-Mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><f11> t m g	(glasses-mode &optional ARG)	Minor mode for making identifiers likeThisLongCamelCaseName readable. <ul style="list-style-type: none">With a prefix argument ARG, enable the mode if ARG is positive, and disable it otherwise.						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">When glasses-mode is active, it tries to add virtual separators (like underscores) at places they belong to.It does not changes the content of the buffer, just the way the text looks.If you type the separator, it is inserted into the buffer.By default it uses underscore as separator. It can be modified through customization of the user-options in the glasses customization group.								
Toggle sentence separators between 1 or 2 spaces	<f11> t m s	(pel-toggle-sentence-end)	Toggle definition of end of sentence between 2 and 1 space character (to help text filling). This has an impact on the commands that deal with sentences (navigation such as (backward-sentence) and (forward-sentence), kill such as (kill-sentence) and (backward-kill-sentence).						
Toggle local electric quote mode	<f11> t m ’	(electric-quote-local-mode &optional ARG)	Toggle ‘ <code>electric-quote-mode</code> ’ only in this buffer. Useful to insert nicer-looking quote characters. <ul style="list-style-type: none">To toggle the mode inside all buffers use: M-x electric-quote-mode						
Toggle prettify-symbols-mode More info: here (on SO) and here (on Reddit) .	<f11> t m y	(prettify-symbols-mode &optional ARG)	Toggle Prettify Symbols mode. <ul style="list-style-type: none">When Prettify Symbols mode and font-locking are enabled, symbols are prettified (displayed as composed characters) according to the rules in ‘prettify-symbols-alist’ (which see), which are locally defined by major modes supporting prettifying. To add further customizations for a given major mode, you can modify ‘prettify-symbols-alist’.						
Mark and Region See also: 🔍 Cut & Paste 🔍 Marking	With most editors when you type over a “selected” region, the text in the selection is automatically replaced by the new text. By default Emacs does not behave like this; instead it allows typing text while there is an active a marked region. If you want Emacs behave like other editors and automatically replace the text activate the “ <code>delete-selection-mode</code> ” with the following command.								
Toggles delete selection mode	<f11> t m d	(delete-selection-mode)	Toggles delete selection-mode on/off. In delete-selection-mode typing a character while a region is active replaces the entire region with what is typed. By default delete selection-mode is off.						

Operation	Keystroke	Function	Note
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Text Modes — References

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GNU Emacs Manual: Text - Words	
GNU Emacs Manual: Text - Sentences	
GNU Emacs Manual: Text - Paragraphs	
GNU Emacs Manual: Text - Quotation Marks	
GNU Emacs Manual: Modes - Minor Modes	
GNU Emacs Manual: Programs - Other Features Useful for Editing Programs	
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