Syntax:

:address/source_pattern/target_pattern/flags

- The source_pattern here is replaced with target_pattern in all lines specified by address.
- The address can be one or a pair of numbers, separated by a comma.
- For instance, 1,$ addresses all lines in a file.
- The most commonly used flag is g, which carries out the substitution for all occurrences of the pattern in a line.

  The following example shows a typical substitution command:

  :1,$s/director/member/g

- Here , director is replaced with member globally throughout the file. If the pattern can't be found, vi responds with the message substitute pattern match failed.
- If you leave out the g, then the substitution will be carried out for the first occurrence in each addressed line

The target pattern is optional. If you leave it out, then you'll delete all instance of the source pattern in all lines matched by address:

:1,50s/unsigned//g   Deletes unsigned everywhere in lines 1 to 50

As shown above, you can choose the range of lines that are to be affected by the substitution.

The following examples should make addressing clear:

:3,10s/director/member/g   substitute line 3 through 10

:.s/director/member/g   only the current line

:$s/director/member/g   only the last line

Interactive Substitution : sometimes you may like to selectively replaces a string. In that case, add c (confirmatory) parameter as the flag at the end

:1,$s/director/member/gc