VS Code Extensions Guide

Web Development (HTML/CSS/General)

Extension	Summary	When to Use	How to Use
Auto Rename Tag	Automatically updates closing tags when you rename opening tags	Writing HTML/XML	Edit opening tag; closing tag updates automatically
Highlight Matching Tag	Highlights matching opening/closing tags	Working with nested HTML	Hover over or click a tag; matching tag highlights
HTML/CSS Support	Enhanced syntax highlighting and intellisense for HTML/CSS	Building web pages	Built-in; provides autocomplete and validation
Live Server	Local server with live reload for HTML files	Testing HTML/CSS in browser	Right-click HTML file → "Open with Live Server"
Tailwind CSS IntelliSense	Autocomplete for Tailwind utility classes	Using Tailwind CSS	Start typing class name; IntelliSense suggests classes
Toggle Quotes	Toggle between single and double quotes	Switching quote style	Select text + Cmd+' (or Alt+') to cycle quotes
Color Highlight	Shows color previews in the editor	Working with colors	Colors in code display as inline swatches
Bracket Pair Colorizer	Colors matching bracket pairs differently	Complex nested code	Automatically applied; brackets color-code pairs

JavaScript/TypeScript Development

Extension	Summary	When to Use	How to Use
Quokka	Real-time JavaScript/TypeScript output and evaluation	Quick JS/TS prototyping	Create `.js` file + Quokka icon in explorer, or cmd palette "Quokka.js: Start on Current File"
Code Runner	Execute code snippets in various languages	Testing small code blocks	Right-click file → "Run Code" or Ctrl+Alt+N
Simple React Snippets	Quick code snippets for React components	Rapid React development	Type snippet (e.g., `rcc` for class component) + Tab
Console Ninja	Shows console.log output inline in editor	Debugging without opening console	Logs appear as inline comments when file runs
Add JsDoc Extension	Generates properly formatted JSDoc comments	Documenting JavaScript functions	Type `/**` above function + Tab to auto-generate

Extension	Summary	When to Use	How to Use
Better Comments	Highlight comments with colors (!, TODO, ?, *)	Organizing code notes	Use `! Comment` (red), `TODO Comment` (orange), etc.
ES7 React/Redux	Snippets and syntax for React/Redux	React development	Type snippet prefix (e.g., `rcc`, `rfc`) + Tab
IntelliCode	AI-powered code completion	Any language; improves suggestions	Built-in; provides smarter IntelliSense suggestions
Paste JSON as Code	Convert JSON to typed code (JS/TS/Python)	Working with API responses	Copy JSON + Cmd+Shift+V + select language

React-Specific Tools

Extension	Summary	When to Use	How to Use
React Native Tools	Debugging and development for React Native	Building React Native apps	Run debugger from command palette or attached device
React Refactor	Automated refactoring helpers for React	Improving React code structure	Right-click component → refactoring options

Linting & Code Quality

Extension	Summary	When to Use	How to Use
ESLint	JavaScript linting with error/warning highlighting	Catching JS errors and style issues	Install + configure `.eslintrc`; errors show inline
Prettier	Auto-format code on save	Maintaining consistent code style	Install + set as default formatter + save file
Code Spell Checker	Highlights spelling errors in code and comments	Catching typos in names and docs	Misspellings underline; right-click for suggestions
Multiple Curse Preserve	Maintains case when doing multi-cursor edits	Batch renaming with case preservation	Multi-select + edit; case automatically preserves

Testing

Extension	Summary	When to Use	How to Use
Jest	Jest testing framework integration	Running unit tests	Install Jest + write tests; run via terminal or extension UI

Extension	Summary	When to Use	How to Use
Jest Runner	Visual test runner with inline results	Debugging individual tests	Click "Run" or "Debug" icon next to test

Version Control & Collaboration

Extension	Summary	When to Use	How to Use
GitLens	Git blame, history, and authorship info	Understanding code changes and history	Hover over code; click to see git history/blame
Rapid API	API testing and development	Testing APIs without Postman	Open sidebar → create requests → send

Remote Development

Extension	Summary	When to Use	How to Use
Remote SSH	Connect and develop on remote machines via SSH	Working on remote servers	Install + "Remote-SSH: Connect to Host" + enter SSH address
Remote Containers	Develop inside Docker containers	Container-based development environments	Open folder in container or attach to running container
Remote Repositories	Browse and edit GitHub repos without cloning	Quick edits to remote repos	Open command palette → "Open Remote Repository"
Dev Containers	Define development environment in `.devcontainer`	Team collaboration with consistent environments	Create `.devcontainer/devcontainer.json` + reopen in container
WSL	Develop using Windows Subsystem for Linux	Linux development on Windows	Install + "Remote-WSL: Reopen in WSL"

Docker & Containerization

Extension	Summary	When to Use	How to Use
Docker	Docker container and image management	Managing Docker containers/images	Use sidebar to view, run, stop containers
Docker Compose	Docker Compose file syntax support	Multi-container applications	Edit `docker-compose.yml`; syntax highlighting + IntelliSense

Extension	Summary	When to Use	How to Use
Container Tools	Extended container management features	Advanced container operations	Available via command palette

Python Development

Extension	Summary	When to Use	How to Use
Python	Core Python support and IntelliSense	Python development	Install + select interpreter; syntax highlighting + IntelliSense built-in
Python Debugger	Integrated Python debugging	Debugging Python scripts	Set breakpoints + Run → Start Debugging (F5)
Python Indent	Smart Python indentation	Writing Python with proper indentation	Automatic; fixes indentation based on context
Jupyter	Jupyter notebook support in VS Code	Running Jupyter notebooks	Create `.ipynb` file + run cells interactively
Jupyter Cell Tags	Organize Jupyter notebooks with cell tags	Large notebook organization	Add tags to cells; organize and filter by tag

C/C++ Development

Extension	Summary	When to Use	How to Use
C/C++	Core C/C++ support, IntelliSense, debugging	C/C++ projects	Install + configure compiler; debug with F5
C/C++ Themes	Syntax themes optimized for C/C++	Improving C/C++ readability	Select from themes in settings

Markdown & Documentation

Extension	Summary	When to Use	How to Use
Markdown All in One	Complete Markdown support (preview, shortcuts, TOC)	Writing Markdown documentation	Write `.md` files; preview + keyboard shortcuts included
Markdown Preview Enhanced	Advanced Markdown preview with extensions	Complex Markdown with diagrams/code	Open preview panel; supports mermaid, PlantUML, etc.
Auto-Open Markdown Preview	Automatically opens preview when editing Markdown	Markdown documentation writing	Automatically opens; toggle with Cmd+Shift+V

Data & Configuration Files

Extension	Summary	When to Use	How to Use
.env	Syntax highlighting and IntelliSense for `.env` files	Environment variable file editing	Open `.env` file; highlighting + variable suggestions
YAML	YAML syntax support and validation	YAML configuration files	Edit `.yaml`/`.yml` files; validation built-in
Rainbow CSV	Color-codes CSV columns for readability	Viewing CSV files	Open CSV; columns display in different colors
vscode-pdf	PDF viewer in VS Code	Quick PDF review without external app	Right-click PDF → "Preview" or double-click

Productivity & UI

Extension	Summary	When to Use	How to Use
Peacock	Color code workspace windows	Managing multiple workspaces	Command palette → "Peacock: Enter Color" + pick color
VS Code Pets	Animated pets in sidebar for fun	Adding personality to your editor	Install; pets appear in activity bar; click to interact
Code Snapshot	Create shareable code screenshots	Sharing code in docs/social media	Select code + command palette → "Snapshot"
To Do Tree	Highlight and organize TODO/FIXME comments	Task management in code	Comments with `TODO:` or `FIXME:` appear in sidebar

Themes & Icons

Extension	Summary	When to Use	How to Use
Bearded Theme	Popular dark theme with warm colors	Personal preference	Select from Themes in settings
Material Icon Theme	Modern file and folder icons	Visual file organization	Install + select from Themes → File Icons

AI & Advanced Tools

Extension	Summary	When to Use	How to Use
Claude Code	Claude AI integration for coding tasks	AI-assisted coding and refactoring	Install + authenticate; use chat alongside code

Quick Reference: Command Palette Access

Many extensions are accessed via **Command Palette** (Cmd+Shift+P / Ctrl+Shift+P). Search for the extension name or specific commands.