Vale linter quick start guide

Tools needed (all open source)

- Vale Linter
- Visual Studio Code
- Git

What is Vale Linter and why is it useful?

Generally, linters are tools people use to help improve their code when programming. Linters analyze code by comparing it to predefined rules to catch potential issues and problems, such as syntax errors or code style irregularities. Vale Linter is a unique type of linter designed to improve prose instead of code by making grammatical suggestions and catching grammatical or spelling errors. Vale Linter is open source and free. It supports plain text files (TXT), Markdown files, HTML files and many other formats. It is designed for command line usage. It also works well with Visual Studio Code and other source code editors such as Atom.

Vale can detect spelling errors, style issues and other grammatical inconsistencies. It also provides suggestions to help you improve your writing for consistency and clarity. Other benefits of Vale in comparison to similar paid tools include:

- It works offline. Internet connection is unnecessary for Vale to function.
- The style and grammatical rules are customizable. If you want and are willing to learn regular expressions (a special programming syntax for detecting patterns), you can even write your own rules to catch typical issues in your writing.

The following guide takes you through installing, configuring, and using Vale.

Installation:

To install Vale Linter:

1. Go to the Vale Linter Github page and download a version applicable for your operating system. This document focuses on how to install Vale Linter in Windows.

2. Unzip the package. This document assumes it is put under your C drive with the following path:

c:\vale_2.15.0_Windows_64-bit

3. Modify your Windows environment variables to include the path from step 2. If you don't know how to set the path, refer to this tutorial.

4. After you have done steps 1-3, test whether Vale was successfully installed by opening a Windows command line and then typing "vale". If you see the Vale usage screen, your installation and path setup were successful.

5. Now, download styles (rules) for your Vale instance. A good starting point is to download some boilerplate (generic) style rules. Open your command line and run:

git clone https://github.com/errata-ai/vale-boilerplate.git

Alternatively, if you do not have Git installed, you can go to the Vale github page, click the green Code button on the upper right corner and then choose "Download Zip".

6. Open your Visual Studio Code, and then click "Extensions" on the vertical left bar. Type "Vale" in the search bar and install it.

Configuration:

Before you start configuring, you need to understand the configuration file ".vale.ini". This file tells Vale where to find style files and what styles to apply to your text. For more information on this configuration file, see the official documentation.

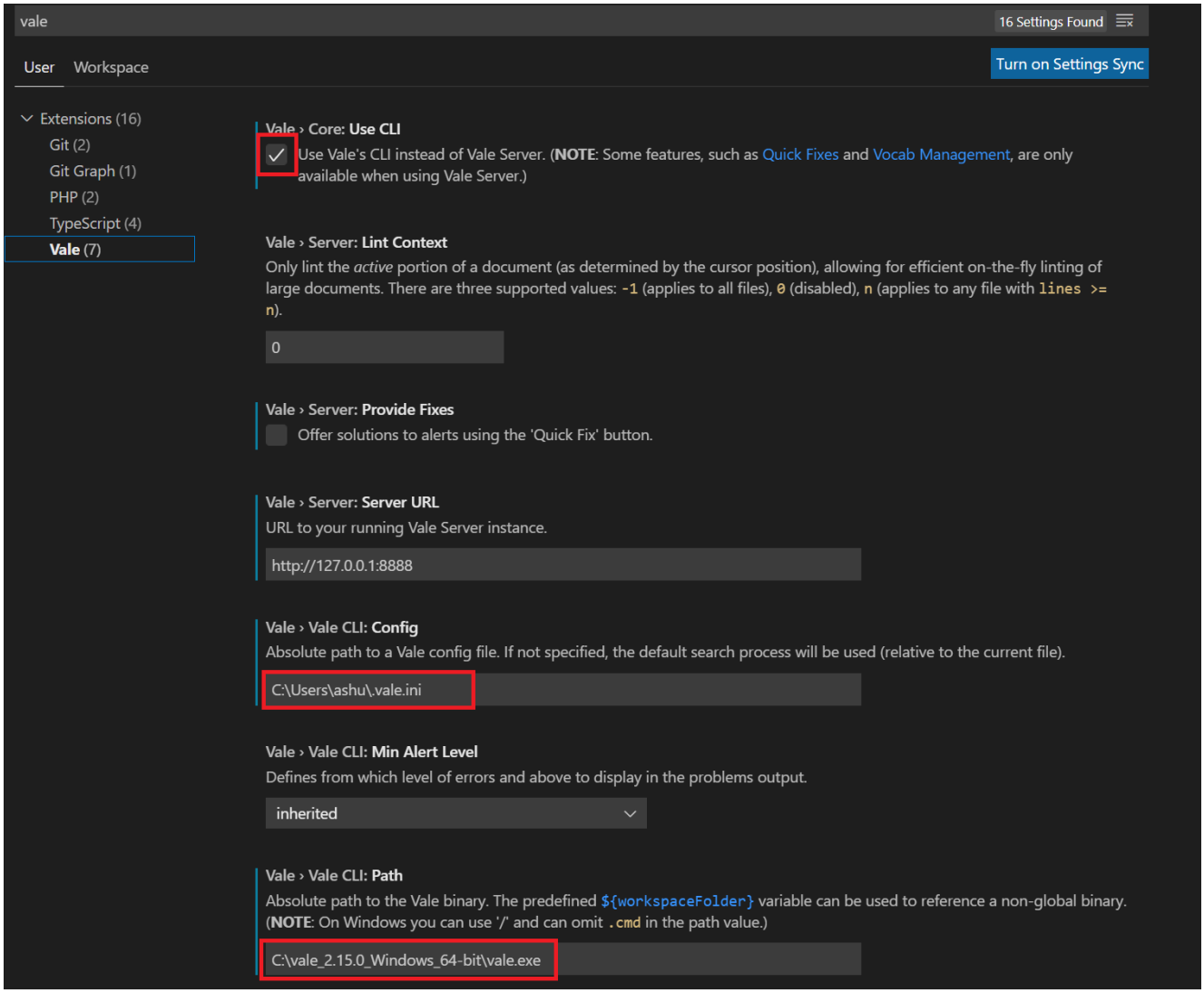
You just need to know the basics of how this file works. In the example ".vale.ini" boilerplate file from installation step 5, you will see the file below.

```
StylesPath = styles

Vocab = Blog

[*.md]
BasedOnStyles = Vocab, write-good
```

The first line needs to be set to where your styles are located.
The third line indicates which format Vale linter will be working on. The example uses Markdown format.
The last line indicates the subdirectories you want the linter to use.

Now, you're ready to configure your Vale linter.

In your Visual Studio Code, click the Manage icon located at the bottom left of the vertical toolbar, in the popup menu, choose "Settings," and locate Extensions. Find Vale within the Extensions page and configure it to match the following screenshot:



You must configure the three items marked in red in the image.

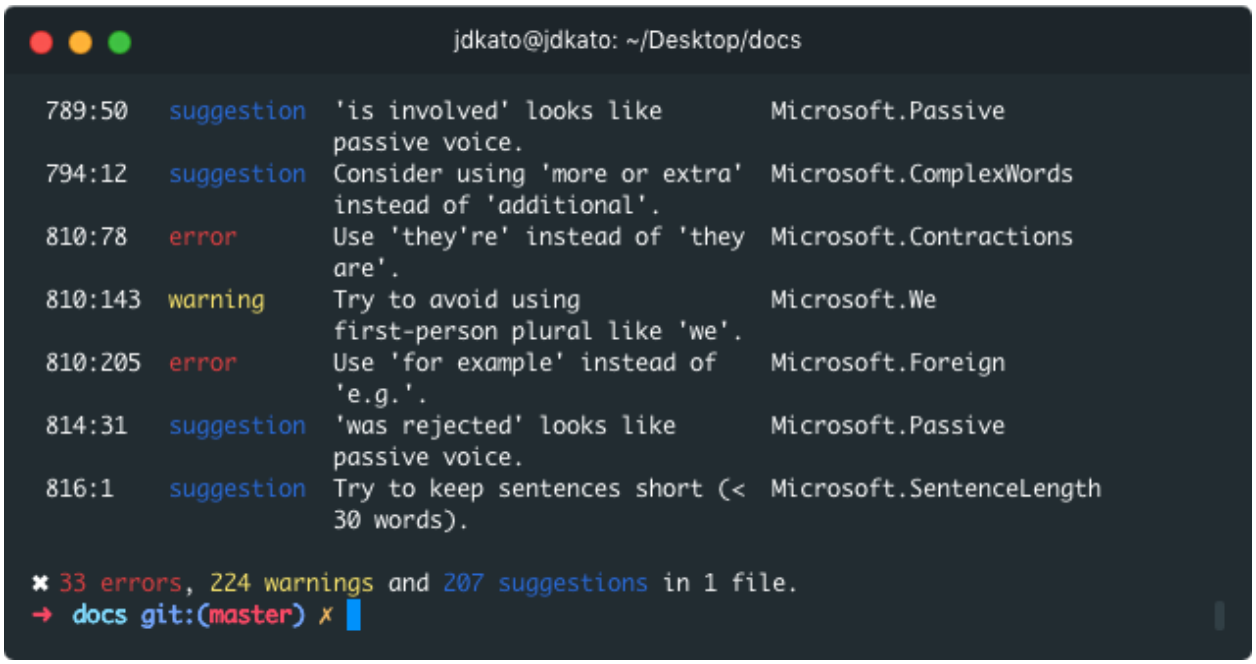
- Select the Vale > Core: Use CLI checkbox.
- For the Vale CLI: Config setting, set the empty field to where the ".vale.ini" file is located on your computer.
- For the Vale CLI: Path setting, set the empty field to the location on your computer where Vale is installed. Refer to step two in the Installation section if you cannot locate this path.

Using Vale:

There are two ways to run the linter:

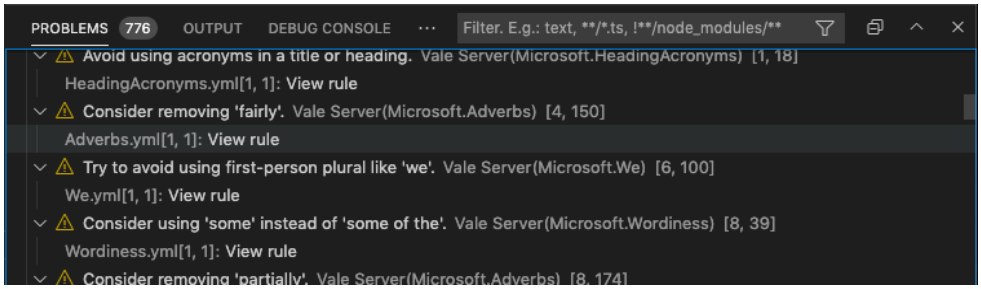
Command line method

Open a command line terminal and navigate to the directory where you cloned the style boilerplate. Once within that directory, run `vale README.md` and you will see the following. This means vale is working properly.



Visual Studio Code editor

While the command line method is fast and easily accessible, it is not interactive. A more interactive and visual way to use Vale is in Visual Studio Code. After you have done the configuration described above, when you open a markdown file in Visual Studio Code, the linter automatically turns and starts working.



Credit:

https://docs.errata.ai/

https://docsy-site.netlify.app/docs/vale/vale-styleguides/