

Detached Heads

Learn how you can switch between different commits either in the same branch or across branches.

We'll cover the following ^

- Detaching
- Think ahead

Sometimes when using Git you might have seen something like this:

```
git status
HEAD detached at 76d43b6
```

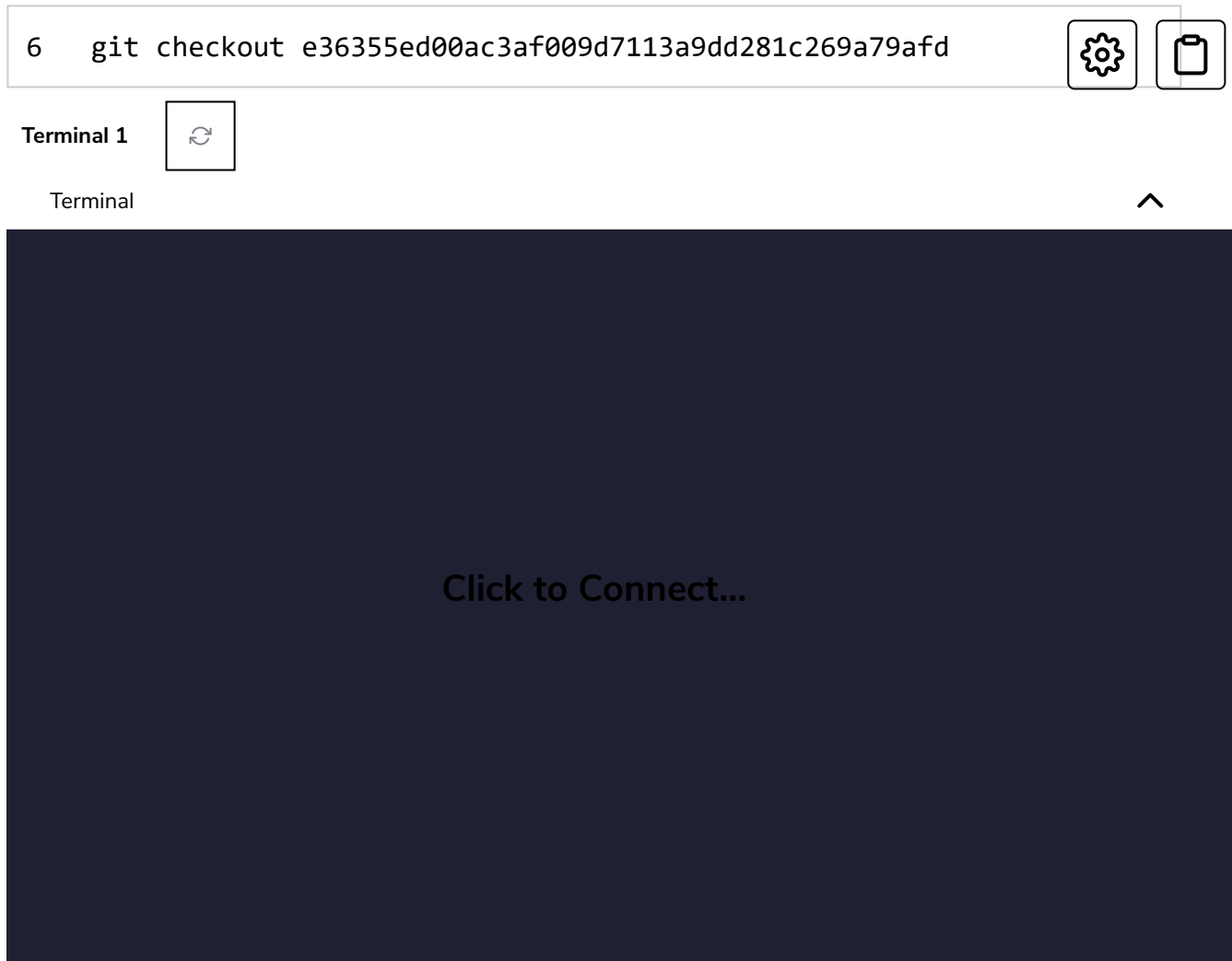
Detaching

The `HEAD` pointer can be moved to an arbitrary point. In fact, `git checkout` does exactly this. You can specify a reference (like `master` or `newfeature`) or a specific commit ID.

The next set of commands will check out the repository at a particular commit:

```
1  mkdir lgthw_git_branch_2
2  cd lgthw_git_branch_2
3  git clone https://github.com/ianmiell/shutit.git
4  cd shutit
5  git log
```

After running the above commands, you will see the log output in the terminal. Hit `q` to exit the log output, and then run the following command to point the `HEAD` pointer to a specific commit:



Read the text carefully and slowly. Make sure you've tried to understand what it all means.

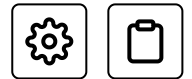
Back to our best friend `git status`:

```
7 git status
```

The `detached HEAD` part of this gives people the most concern. A `detached HEAD` sounds like a bad thing and can be bewildering upon seeing it.

It is quite simple though. It just means that your Git repository's `HEAD` pointer (which is where Git currently thinks it is) is not pointed at a branch at the moment. Instead, it's pointed at a commit ID, i.e., the `HEAD` is detached from a branch. There might be a branch pointed at that commit (`git log --decorate` will tell you this), but your `HEAD` is not pointed at it.

Think ahead



Think about this and ponder the advice you'd give to someone in a detached HEAD state to reorient themselves, given what you've been taught so far about branches and `git log`. Answering questions like this is the best way to understand Git.

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