

Vi Quick Reference

Entering and Exiting vi

vi <i>file</i>	Edits <i>file</i> .
vi + <i>n file</i>	Edits <i>file</i> , cursor at line <i>n</i> .
vi + <i>file</i>	Edits <i>file</i> , cursor at end.
vi -r	List system saved files.
vi -r <i>file</i>	Edits system saved <i>file</i> .
vi <i>file</i> ...	Edits first <i>file</i> ; rest via :n .
vi -t <i>tag</i>	Edits file through <i>tag</i> in tags file.
vi +/ <i>pattern file</i>	Edits file, cursor at <i>pattern</i> .
view <i>file</i>	vi <i>file</i> , no modification.
ZZ	Exits from vi , saving changes.
~Z	Stops vi for later resumption.

The Display

Last line	Error messages, echoing input to commands: /, ?, :, !, feed-back about I/O and large changes.
@ lines	On screen only, not in file.
~ lines	Lines past end of file.
^ <i>x</i>	Control characters.
TABs	Expands to spaces, cursor on last space.

Counts before vi Commands

Line/column no.	z , G ,
Scroll amount	^D , ^U
Replicate insert	a , i , A , I
Repeat effect	Most rest

Vi States

Command mode	Executes commands; the normal and initial state. Other modes return to command mode. ESC cancels a partial command.
Insert mode	Entered by a, i, A, I, o, O, c, C, s, S, R, followed by arbitrary text terminated by ESC. An interrupt aborts an insertion.
Last line	Reads user input for commands /, ?, :, !, which terminates in ESC or RETURN. An interrupt aborts.

Basic Commands

dw	Deletes a word.
de	Deletes a word leaving punctuation.
dd	Deletes a line.
3dd	Deletes three lines.
d%	Deletes to matching parenthesis/bracket
<i>i</i> textESC	Inserts <i>text</i>
<i>cw</i> textESC	Changes word to <i>text</i>
<i>ea</i> sESC	Pluralizes word.
xp	Transposes characters.

Interrupting, Cancelling, Shell Interaction

ESC	Ends insert, input, or incomplete command.
~?	(DELETE) interrupts vi .
~Z	Suspends vi (<i>cs</i> h and <i>ks</i> h).
:sh	Runs default Shell, then returns.
!:cmd	Runs Shell-level <i>cmd</i> , then returns.

File Manipulation

:w	Writes back changes.
:wq	Writes and quits from vi .
:q	Quits from vi .
:q!	Quits, discards changes.
:e <i>file</i>	Edits <i>file</i> .
:e!	Reedits, discards changes.

<code>:e + file</code>	Edits <i>file</i> , starting at the end.
<code>:e +n file</code>	Edits <i>file</i> starting at line <i>n</i> .
<code>:w file</code>	Writes to <i>file</i> .
<code>:w! file</code>	Overwrites <i>file</i> .
<code>:n</code>	Edits next file in argument list.
<code>:n args</code>	Specifies new argument list.
<code>:f</code>	Displays current file and line.
<code>^G</code>	Synonym for <code>:f</code> .
<code>:ta tag</code>	Goes to tags file entry <i>tag</i> .
<code>^]</code>	Same as <code>:ta</code> , but current word is <i>tag</i> .

Positioning within File

<code>^F</code>	Moves forward a screen.
<code>^B</code>	Moves backward a screen.
<code>^D</code>	Scrolls down half a screen.
<code>^U</code>	Scrolls up half a screen.
<code>kG</code>	Goto line <i>k</i> or last line (default).
<code>/patternESC</code>	Searches forward for <i>pattern</i> .
<code>?patternESC</code>	Searches backward for <i>pattern</i> .
<code>n</code>	Repeats last / or ?.
<code>N</code>	Repeats last / or ? in other direction.
<code>/pattern/+n</code>	Goto <i>n</i> th line after <i>pattern</i> .
<code>?pattern?-n</code>	Goto <i>n</i> th line before <i>pattern</i> .
<code>]]</code>	Next section or function.
<code>[[</code>	Previous section or function.
<code>%</code>	Finds matching (,), {, or }.

Adjusting the Screen

<code>^L</code>	Clears and redisplay.
<code>^R</code>	Redisplay, eliminates @ lines.
<code>zRETURN</code>	Current line at window top.
<code>z-</code>	Current line at window bottom.
<code>z.</code>	Current line at window center.
<code>/pattern/z-</code>	Line with <i>pattern</i> at bottom.
<code>zn</code>	Uses <i>n</i> line window.
<code>^E</code>	Scrolls window down one line.
<code>^Y</code>	Scrolls window up one line.

Marking and Returning

‘ ‘	Returns to previous context.
’ ’	Returns to previous context at first nonblank character of the line.
<i>m</i> <i>x</i>	Marks position with letter <i>x</i> .
‘ <i>x</i>	Returns to marked position <i>x</i> .
’ <i>x</i>	Returns to <i>x</i> at first nonblank character in line.

Line Positioning

: .=	Displays current line number
H	Moves to the first window line.
L	Moves to the last window line.
M	Moves to the middle window line.
+	Next line.
-	Previous line.
RETURN	Same as ‘+’.
↓ or j	Next line, same column.
↑ or k	Previous line, same column.

Character Positioning

~	First nonblank character.
0	(zero) Beginning of line (column one).
\$	End of line (last character).
h or ←	Previous character.
l or →	Next character.
^H	Same as <i>leftarrow</i> .
SPACE	Same as →.
<i>f</i> <i>x</i>	Finds <i>x</i> forward in current line.
<i>F</i> <i>x</i>	Finds <i>x</i> backward in current line.
<i>t</i> <i>x</i>	Moves forward upto <i>x</i> in current line.
<i>T</i> <i>x</i>	Moves backward upto <i>x</i> in current line.
;	Repeats last <i>f</i> <i>F</i> <i>t</i> or <i>T</i>
,	; in the reverse direction.
	Moves to specified column.
%	Moves to matching (, {,), or }.

Words, Sentences, Paragraphs

w	Next word.
b	Moves backward to the beginning of a word.
e	End of word.
)	Next sentence.
}	Next paragraph.
(Moves backward to the beginning of a sentence.
{	Moves backward to the beginning of a paragraph.
W	Next blank delimited word.
B	Moves backward to the beginning of a blank delimited word.
E	End of blank delimited word.

Corrections During Insert

\hat{H}	Deletes last input character.
\hat{W}	Deletes last input word.
<i>erase</i>	Character erase, same as \hat{H} .
<i>kill</i>	Line kill, deletes entire input line.
\backslash	Escapes character erase and line kill.
ESC	Ends insertion, back to command mode.
<i>interrupt</i>	Aborts insert (usually \hat{c}).
\hat{D}	Backtabs over blanks supplied by autoindent.
$\hat{\hat{D}}$	(hat then \hat{D}) Kills autoindent; autoindent remains effective for next line.
$O\hat{D}$	Kills autoindent; until next indent.
\hat{V}	Quotes any special character.

Insert and Replace

a	Inserts after cursor.
i	Inserts before cursor.
A	Inserts at end of current line.
I	Inserts before first nonblank character of current line.
o	Opens a line for insertion below current line.
O	Opens a line for insertion above current line.
<i>rx</i>	Replaces current character with <i>x</i> .
R	Overwrites characters.
\sim	Changes case of current character.

Operators (Double to affect lines)

d	Deletes text object.
c	Changes text object.
<	Left shifts text object.
>	Right shifts text object.
y	Yanks text object to buffer.

Miscellaneous Operations

C	Changes rest of line.
D	Deletes rest of line.
s	Substitutes characters.
S	Substitutes lines.
J	Joins lines.
x	Deletes characters.
X	Deletes characters before cursor.

Cut and Paste

p or "xp	Pastes deleted or buffer <i>x</i> text after current position/line.
P or "x	Pastes deleted or buffer <i>x</i> text before current position/line.
"xy	Copies (Yanks) text object to buffer <i>x</i> .
"xd	Deletes text object into buffer <i>x</i> .
yy	Yanks current line.
nyy	Yanks several lines.

Undo, Redo, and Retrieve

u	Undoes last change.
U	Restores current line.
.	Repeats last change.
"np	Retrieves <i>n</i> th last delete.