jless JSON viewer

START HERE

`jless <file>`
Open a JSON file

/<pattern>
Search forward

j / **k**
Line down / up

y › **y**
Copy value

h / **l**
Collapse or parent / expand

m
Toggle line mode

Space
Toggle collapse

q
Quit

CONCEPTS

jless is a read-only viewer, not an editor. It opens in data mode: no commas or closing braces, so structure stays visible. Press m for the familiar pretty-printed line mode.

Open file or pipe
↓ collapse
Navigate fold, search
↓ yank
Copy path or value paste into jq
Find a value, then take it with you

Most movement keys take a count first: 5j moves five lines. On macOS the same keys work; only clipboard behaviour depends on the terminal.

MOVING

j / **Down** / **Ctrl** + **n**
Down one line

k / **Up** / **Ctrl** + **p**
Up one line

J Next sibling

K Previous sibling

g / **Home** First line

G / **End** Last line

<n>g Jump to line <n>

w
Forward to next depth change

b
Backward to previous depth change

0 / **^** First sibling of parent

$ Last sibling of parent

Ctrl + **f** / **PageDown**
Down one screen

MOVING (cont.)

Ctrl + **b** / **PageUp**
Up one screen

FOLDING

h / **Left**
Collapse, or go to parent

l / **Right**
Expand, or go to first child

Space Toggle collapsed state

H
Go to parent without collapsing

c Collapse node and siblings

e Expand node and siblings

C
Deep collapse node and siblings

E
Deep expand node and siblings
Expands every level below, handy to see a whole small document.

SEARCHING

/<pattern> Search forward

?<pattern> Search backward

n Next match

N Previous match

***** Next match for this key

Previous match for this key

/<pattern>/s
Case-sensitive search
The default is smart case: lowercase patterns ignore case.

\[/ **\{**
Escape a bracket in a pattern
[]{} are literal by default; escape them to get regex meaning.

COPY AND PRINT

y › **y**
Copy value, pretty-printed

y › **v** Copy value on one line

y › **s**
Copy string without escapes

y › **k** Copy the key

y › **p** Copy path from root
Gives a path like .foo[3].bar.

y › **b**
Copy path in bracket form

y › **q** Copy path as a jq filter
Array indexes become [], like .foo[].bar.

p<*key*>
Print instead of copy
Each y key has a p twin that prints to the terminal; useful over SSH without a clipboard.

VIEW AND SCROLL

m
Toggle data mode and line mode

% Jump to matching bracket
Works in line mode, with the cursor on a bracket.

Ctrl + **d** / **Ctrl** + **u**
Half screen down / up

Ctrl + **e** / **Ctrl** + **y**
Scroll one line down / up

z › **z** Center the focused line

z › **t** Focused line to top

z › **b** Focused line to bottom

. / **,**
Scroll long value right / left

;
Long value: jump to end or back

VIEW AND SCROLL (cont.)

> / **<**
Increase / decrease indentation

COMMANDS AND FLAGS

:help / **F1** Show built-in help

q / **Ctrl** + **c** / **:quit** Quit

:set › **number**
Show line numbers
Use :set nonumber to hide or :set number! to toggle.

:set › **relativenumber**
Show relative line numbers

`jless -n <file>`
Show line numbers at start

`jless -r <file>`
Show relative line numbers

`jless --yaml <file>`
Parse input as YAML

`<cmd> | jless`
Read JSON from stdin

RECIPES

Explore an API response

```
curl -s https://api.example.com/items | jless
# /name then n to find fields
# y q to copy the jq path, then use it in jq
```

View YAML with an alias

```
alias yless='jless --yaml'
yless docker-compose.yml
```

Pretty-print jq output interactively

```
jq '.items[] | select(.ok)' data.json | jless
# streams of JSON values are accepted
```

Copy path, extract with jq

```
# in jless: focus a value, press y q
jq '.foo[].bar' data.json
```