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
```