jless JSON viewer

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>

MOVING (cont.)

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

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

FOLDING (cont.)

E
Deep expand node and siblings

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

\[/ \{
Escape a bracket in a pattern

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

COPY AND PRINT (cont.)

y › b
Copy path in bracket form

y › q
Copy path as a jq filter

p<key>
Print instead of copy

VIEW AND SCROLL

m
Toggle data mode and line mode

%
Jump to matching bracket

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

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

z › z
Center the focused line

. / ,
Scroll long value right / left

;
Long value: jump to end or back

COMMANDS AND FLAGS

:help / F1
Show built-in help

q / Ctrl + c / :quit Quit

COMMANDS AND FLAGS (cont.)

:set › number
Show line numbers

: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
```