# nano Simple terminal editor

**START HERE**

Ctrl + O
Save (write out)

Ctrl + F
Search forward

Ctrl + X
Exit

Alt + R
Replace

Ctrl + K
Cut line

Alt + G
Go to line

Ctrl + U
Paste

Ctrl + G
Help

## CONCEPTS

^ in the bottom bar means Ctrl, M- means Alt. The bar always lists the keys valid right now.

**nano file** open
**Edit** type, cut, paste
↓ Ctrl+O
**Save** confirm name
↓ Ctrl+X
**Exit**
Editing session

Alt means Esc then the key on terminals without Alt. Alt+key is written M-key in the help.

nano --modernbindings (-/) switches to Ctrl+C/V/X, Ctrl+Z/Y, Ctrl+S, Ctrl+Q instead of the keys on this sheet.

## FILES AND BUFFERS

Ctrl + O Write out (save as)

Ctrl + S Save current file

Ctrl + X
Close buffer, exit nano

Ctrl + R
Insert another file at cursor

Alt + Left
Switch to previous buffer

Alt + Right
Switch to next buffer

Ctrl + G Show help

`nano +<line>,<col> <file>`
Open at line and column

`nano -`
Read from standard input

`nano -v <file>`
Open read-only (view mode)

## CUT, COPY, PASTE

Ctrl + K Cut current line

Alt + 6 Copy current line

Ctrl + U Paste the cut buffer

Alt + A
Set or unset the mark (select)

Alt + T
Cut from cursor to end of buffer

## CUT, COPY, PASTE (cont.)

Alt + Del Delete current line

Ctrl + D
Delete character under cursor

Ctrl + H
Delete character before cursor

Alt + Bsp
Delete word to the left

Ctrl + Del
Delete word to the right

Press Alt+A, move the cursor, then Ctrl+K or Alt+6 to cut or copy that region.

## UNDO AND EDITING

Alt + U Undo

Alt + E Redo

Alt + 3
Comment or uncomment line or region

Tab Indent marked region

Shift + Tab
Unindent marked region

Ctrl + ]
Complete current word

Alt + V
Insert next keystroke verbatim

Alt + :
Start or stop macro recording

Alt + ; Replay the macro

## SEARCH AND REPLACE

Ctrl + F Search forward

Ctrl + B Search backward

Alt + F
Repeat search forward

Alt + B
Repeat search backward

Alt + R
Start search and replace

Alt + ]
Jump to matching bracket

In the search prompt, Alt+C toggles case, Alt+R regex, Alt+B backwards. In replace, A replaces all.

## NAVIGATION

Ctrl + A Start of line

Ctrl + E End of line

Alt + G Go to line number

Ctrl + Y Page up

Ctrl + V Page down

Ctrl + Left / Ctrl + Right
Word back / forward

Ctrl + Up / Ctrl + Down
Previous / next block

Alt + \ Top of buffer

Alt + / End of buffer

Ctrl + L
Center the current line

Alt + Up / Alt + Down
Scroll view without moving cursor

Ctrl + C Show cursor position

## FORMAT AND TOOLS

Ctrl + J
Justify paragraph or region

Alt + J
Justify the whole buffer

Ctrl + T Execute a command

Ctrl + T › Ctrl + S
Spell check

Ctrl + T › Ctrl + Y
Linter (syntax check)

Ctrl + T › Ctrl + O
Run formatter

Alt + D
Count lines, words, characters

## VIEW TOGGLES

Alt + N Toggle line numbers

Alt + S Toggle soft wrapping

Alt + P Show whitespace

Alt + X
Hide or show help lines

Alt + Z
Hide or show info bars

Alt + C
Constant cursor position display

## OPTIONS AND NANORC

`nano -l <file>`
Show line numbers

`nano -m <file>`
Enable mouse

`nano -i <file>`
Auto-indent new lines

`nano -E -T <n> <file>`
Tabs to spaces, tab width n

`nano -B <file>`
Back up existing file on save

`nano -Y <name> <file>`
Force a syntax for colouring

`nano -z`
List available syntaxes

`nano -I <file>`
Ignore nanorc files

`nano -f <rcfile> <file>`
Use this nanorc only

`nano -/ <file>`
Use modern Ctrl+C/V/X/Z bindings

### Config files

| File | Used for |
|---|---|
| `~/.nanorc` | Per-user settings |
| `~/.config/nano/nanorc` | Per-user, XDG location |
| `/etc/nanorc` | System-wide defaults |

## RECIPES

### Comfortable ~/.nanorc

```
set linenumbers
set mouse
set tabsize 4
set tabstospaces
set autoindent
set softwrap
include "/usr/share/nano/*.nanorc"
```

### Edit a file at a given line

```
nano +42 app.py
nano +42,10 app.py
# Alt+G jumps once inside
```

### Replace in whole file

```
# Alt+R, type the search text, Enter
# type the replacement, Enter
# A replaces all, Y/N step through
```

### Edit root files safely

```
sudoedit /etc/hosts
# or: sudo -e /etc/hosts
EDITOR=nano sudoedit /etc/hosts
```