Vim Modal text editor

START HERE

`i` Insert before cursor

`d` › `d` Delete line

`Esc` Back to Normal mode

`u` Undo

`:w` Save

`/` Search forward

`:q` Quit

`.` Repeat last change

Normal commands — `i a o` → **Insert** typing — `Esc` → **Normal** commands — `v V Ctrl+V` → **Visual** select

Normal mode is the hub

Tab page a layout of windows
Window a view onto a buffer
Buffer a file in memory

CONCEPTS

Vim has modes. Normal mode is home: keys are commands. Press Esc to return to it.

Commands read like a sentence: operator + motion, e.g. d w deletes a word, c i " changes inside quotes.

Prefix a count to repeat: 3 d d deletes three lines, d 2 w two words.

Key sequences are typed one after another, not held together: d w means press d, then w.

MODES & FILES

`i` Insert before cursor

`Esc` Back to Normal mode

Ctrl+[or Ctrl+C also leave Insert mode.

`v` / `V`
Visual: characters / lines

`:w` Save file

`:q` Quit window

`:wq` / `ZZ` Save and quit

ZZ only writes if something changed.

`:q!` Quit and discard changes

MOTIONS

`h` / `j` / `k` / `l`
Left / down / up / right

`w` / `b` / `e`
Next word / previous / end

`0` / `^` / `$`
Line start / first char / end

`g` › `g` / `G` First / last line

`{` / `}`
Paragraph back / forward

`Ctrl` + `D` / `Ctrl` + `U`
Half page down / up

`f` › *<c>* / `t` › *<c>*
To / before character on line

Repeat with ; and reverse with ,

`;` / `,` Repeat / reverse f t

`%` Jump to matching bracket

<n> › `G` Go to line n

`Ctrl` + `O` / `Ctrl` + `I`
Older / newer jump position

INSERT

`a` Append after cursor

`I` / `A` Insert at line start / end

`o` / `O`
Open line below / above

`s` / `S` Substitute char / line

`Ctrl` + `W`
Delete word before cursor

`Ctrl` + `R` › *<reg>*
Insert register contents

`Ctrl` + `N` / `Ctrl` + `P`
Complete word next / previous

OPERATORS

`d` › `d` Delete line

`d` › *<motion>* Delete (cut)

`D` Delete to end of line

`c` › *<motion>*
Change: delete and insert

`c` › `c` / `C`
Change line / to end

`c` › `w` Change word

cw acts like ce when on a non-blank.

`y` › *<motion>* Yank (copy)

`y` › `y` Yank line

`x` / `X`
Delete char under / before

`r` › *<c>*
Replace one character

`u` Undo

`Ctrl` + `R` Redo

`.` Repeat last change

Works for changes and puts, not for Ex commands.

`p` / `P`
Put after / before cursor

`>` › `>` / `<` › `<`
Indent / outdent line

`J` Join lines with a space

`Ctrl` + `A` / `Ctrl` + `X`
Increment / decrement number

Operator + motion

Keys	Effect
`d i w`	delete word
`c i "`	change inside quotes
`y a p`	yank paragraph
`d t ,`	delete up to comma
`> i {`	indent block

TEXT OBJECTS

`i` › `w` / `a` › `w`
Word / word with space

`i` › `"` / `a` › `"`
Inside / around double quotes

i' and i` work the same way.

`i` › `(` / `a` › `(`
Inside / around parentheses

b is a synonym: ib, ab.

`i` › `{` / `a` › `{`
Inside / around braces

`i` › `p` / `a` › `p` Paragraph

`i` › `t` / `a` › `t`
Inside / around XML tag

Text objects work from anywhere inside; no need to move to the start first. Use them after an operator or in Visual mode.

VISUAL MODE

`v` Characterwise Visual

`V` Linewise Visual

`Ctrl` + `V` Blockwise Visual

`g` › `v`
Reselect last Visual area

`Ctrl` + `V` › `I`
Insert on all block lines

Press Esc to apply to every line.

`:` Ex command on selection

Vim fills in '<,'> for the range.

Select first, then act: Visual mode takes the same operators (d y c > = and so on).

SEARCH & REPLACE

`/` › *<pat>* Search forward

`?` › *<pat>* Search backward

`n` / `N` Next / previous match

`*` / `#`
Search word under cursor

g and g# skip the whole-word match.*

`:noh` Clear search highlight

`:s/<a>/<b>/`
Replace first on line

`:%s/<a>/<b>/g`
Replace in whole file

SEARCH & REPLACE (cont.)

`:%s/<a>/<b>/gc`
Replace with confirmation

y yes, n no, a all, q quit, l last.

`:g/<pat>/d`
Delete matching lines

REGISTERS & MACROS

`"` › *<a-z>* › `y`
Yank into named register

`"` › *<a-z>* › `p`
Put from named register

System clipboard

Keys	Effect
`"+y`	yank to clipboard
`"+p`	put from clipboard

`"` › `0` › `p` Put last yank

Deletes do not overwrite register 0.

`q` › *<a-z>*
Record macro, q again stops

`@` › *<a-z>* Play macro

`@` › `@` Replay last macro

WINDOWS & BUFFERS

`Ctrl` + `W` › `s` / `v`
Split horizontal / vertical

`Ctrl` + `W` › `h/j/k/l`
Move to window left/down/up/right

`:ls` List buffers

`:b` › *<n>* Go to buffer n

`Ctrl` + `^` Toggle alternate file

FOLDS & MISC

`:set` › `nu` Show line numbers

`:set` › `hls` › `is`
Highlight / incrementally search

RECIPES

Open from the shell

```
vim +42 <file>  # at line 42
vim +/<pat> <file>
vim -d a b  # diff
find . -name '*.c' | vim -
```

Rename in file, confirm each

```
:%s/\<old\>/new/gc
```

Edit many lines at once

```
Ctrl+V  # select column
j j j  # extend down
I // Esc  # prefix all
```