

vim starter kit

Eight things you must know to use vim

1. The vim editor is modal. The main two modes are “command” mode and “insert” mode. When you are in insert mode, everything you type goes directly into the file. When you are in command mode, every key you hit is some command, such as “undo” or “delete this character”. You always start out in command mode, so you’ll have to enter insert mode before you can start typing text. Modal editing
2. The escape key ( in the upper-left corner of the keyboard) always gets you back to command mode. If you are already in command mode, it does nothing (except beep). If you don’t know what mode you’re in, hit escape and then you’ll know you’re in command mode. If you get a little lost, you can always hit ESC to get back to a known place. Escape! Command mode: 
3. From command mode, hit the ‘i’ key to enter insert mode. Insert mode: 
4. In command mode, hit the ‘x’ key to delete the character underneath the cursor. Delete char: 
5. In command mode, hit ‘dd’ to delete the whole line the cursor is on. Delete line:  
6. You can undo your mistakes! In command mode, hit ‘u’ to undo the most recent thing you did (and ‘u’ again to undo the thing before that, and so on). Note that a whole insertion, from the time you hit ‘i’ to the time you hit Escape, is considered one action—if you just need to delete a small amount of text, use ‘x’ or ‘dd’. Undo: 
7. In command mode, Control-R will redo the action you just undid. Accidentally pressed ‘u’ and lost an entire insertion of text? Control-R (abbreviated Ctrl-R or just ^R) will “undo the undo” and put the text back where it was. (Whew.) Redo:  
8. If you’re in command mode, type :wq and hit Enter to save the current file and quit the editor. Save and quit: :wq

It’s a little strange at first, but once you get the hang of using a modal editor it’s actually pretty powerful. It gets a *lot* easier with practice.