

So now you have opened one file to start with. Before proceeding further let us understanding few minor but important concepts explained below.

Operation Modes

While working with vi editor you would come across following two modes –

- **Command mode** – This mode enables you to perform administrative tasks such as saving files, executing commands, moving the cursor, cutting *yanking* and pasting lines or words, and finding and replacing. In this mode, whatever you type is interpreted as a command.
- **Insert mode** – This mode enables you to insert text into the file. Everything that's typed in this mode is interpreted as input and finally it is put in the file .

The vi always starts in command mode. To enter text, you must be in insert mode. To come in insert mode you simply type **i**. To get out of insert mode, press the **Esc** key, which will put you back into command mode.

Hint – If you are not sure which mode you are in, press the Esc key twice, and then you'll be in command mode. You open a file using vi editor and start type some characters and then come in command mode to understand the difference.

Getting Out of vi

The command to quit out of vi is :q. Once in command mode, type colon, and 'q', followed by return. If your file has been modified in any way, the editor will warn you of this, and not let you quit. To ignore this message, the command to quit out of vi without saving is :q!. This lets you exit vi without saving any of the changes.

The command to save the contents of the editor is :w. You can combine the above command with the quit command, or :wq and return.

The easiest way to save your changes and exit out of vi is the ZZ command. When you are in command mode, type ZZ and it will do the equivalent of :wq.

You can specify a different file name to save to by specifying the name after the :w. For example, if you wanted to save the file you were working as another file name called filename2, you would type :w filename2 and return. Try it once.

Moving within a File

To move around within a file without affecting your text, you must be in command mode *pressEsc twice*. Here are some of the commands you can use to move around one character at a time –

Command	Description
k	Moves the cursor up one line.
j	Moves the cursor down one line.
h	Moves the cursor to the left one character position.
l	Moves the cursor to the right one character position.

There are following two important points to be noted –

- The vi is case-sensitive, so you need to pay special attention to capitalization when using commands.
- Most commands in vi can be prefaced by the number of times you want the action to occur. For example, 2j moves cursor two lines down the cursor location.