

Ed text editor cheat sheet

Author: Yuri Slobodyanyuk, <https://linkedin.com/in/yurislobodyanyuk/> .

STATUS: Work in progress.

NOTE

The cheat sheet is for GNU version of `ed`. All values in `[]` are optional. `ed` fully supports Unicode.

Table 1. Command mode

Command	Description
[n]a	Append - append a new line after the current , or, if <i>n</i> is given, after the <i>nth</i> line, then enter input mode. Use 0 (zero) for <i>n</i> to append at the top of the buffer.
[n]i	Insert - insert a new line before the current or the <i>nth</i> line, if given, then enter the input mode. Use 0 as <i>n</i> to insert at the top of the buffer
[n]c	Change - change the current, or the <i>nth</i> line if given, then enter the input mode. The current (or specified) line gets deleted before you start typing a new one.
[start,end]m[dest]	Move lines, including, from <i>start</i> up to the <i>end</i> after the <i>dest</i> destination line.
[start,end]t[dest]	Transfer - copy lines <i>start</i> through <i>end</i> after the <i>dest</i> line. If no line numbers are given, copies the current line and pastes underneath.
e [filename]	Edit a file - <i>filename</i> if given, default if not. WARNING: Current buffer and all of its changes is discarded.
[start,end]w [filename]	Write the current buffer (whole or just lines between <i>start</i> and <i>end</i>) to a <i>filename</i> if given or the currently set with the <code>file</code> command. The contents of the <i>filename</i> is overwritten! Ed reports number of characters written on success.
[start, end]W [filename]	Write by appending the buffer to the file <i>filename</i> , the current contents of the <i>filename</i> are not overwritten. Ed reports number of characters written on success.
[.]=	Show number of lines in the buffer, or, if <code>.</code> (dot) is given <code>.=</code> , show the line number of the current line.

Command	Description
P	Show/hide prompt, * (asterisk) is the default.
H	Turn on/off verbose error indication mode. With this mode off, ed only outputs ? for any error without additional info.
! shell command(s)	Run the given <i>shell command(s)</i> displaying their output without leaving the ed . Hitting <Enter> returns to the ed buffer. The shell's output is not kept or redirected to the buffer in any way.
r	Read
r !shell command(s)	Run the shell command
[start,end]p	Print lines from <i>start</i> to <i>end</i> or current if not set. Sets current line to the last line printed.
q	Quit the ed , warns if there are unsaved changes, if repeated 2nd time, quits discarding any unsaved changes.
Q	Quit ed unconditionally, discarding any unsaved changes.
u	Undo the last change. ed has only one level of undo, entering u the second time redoes the change undone before.
n	Go to the line <i>n</i> .
[starting_address]z[lines-to-scroll]	Scroll default 24 lines down, if <i>lines-to-scroll</i> is not given. Optionally, start scrolling not from the current line (default), but from the line number <i>starting_address</i> . Resets current line to the last line after scrolling position.
[start,end]n	Print <i>start,end</i> lines prefixed by their line number, analog of p but prints line numbers as well. Use ,n to print the whole buffer with line numbers.
[start, end]s/regex/replacement/[g]	Substitute - on lines <i>start</i> to <i>end</i> , find 1st occurrence of <i>regex</i> from the left (or all the occurrences if g for Global prefix is added) and replace with the <i>replacement</i> .

Table 2. Input mode

Command	Description
. (dot on a line by itself)	Switch from input to the command mode. The . (dot) should be entered on a new line by itself, then <Enter>.

Command	Description
CTRL + C	Discard the changes done in the current input mode sequence, and return to the command mode. Only changes since entering last input mode are discarded, not the whole session.