

The Woodnotes Emacs Cheat Sheet for Writers (not Coders)

Emacs is a great word processor for authors and writers: these are the most useful commands for authors of prose. Hint: set text-mode before you begin.

Files (Opening, Saving, Printing)

C-x C-f
read a file into Emacs

C-x C-s
save a file back to disk

C-x s
save all files

C-x i
insert contents of another file into this buffer

C-x C-v
replace this file with the file you really want

C-x C-w
write buffer to a file with another name

M-1 M-x ps-print-buffer-with-faces
print buffer to a postscript file
(find-file-other-frame)

open file in a separate frame

Window ("Frame") and Buffer Commands

C-x 2 (split-window-vertically)
Open another window below this one

C-x 3 (split-window-horizontally)
Open another window beside this one

C-x 5 0 (delete-frame)
delete a frame

C-x 5 o (other-frame)
shift focus to other frame

C-x ^, C-x v
Grow/Shrink window vertically

C-x {, C-x }
Grow/Shrink window horizontally.

C-x 0 (delete-window)

C-x 1 (delete-other-windows)

C-x 4 C-f (find-file-other-window)

Cursor Movement

Entity to Move Over	Backward	Forward
character	C-b	C-f
word	M-b	M-f
line	C-p	C-n
sentence	M-a	M-e
paragraph	M-{	M-}
page	C-x [C-x]
line beginning/end	C-a	C-e
buffer beginning (or end)	M-<	M->

M-m (back-to-indentation)
Move (forward or back) to the first non blank character on the current line

C-u 8 C-f
moves forward eight characters

C-x C-x
Exchange point and mark (move between ends of selection)

Scrolling

previous/next screen	M-v	C-v
scroll left/right	C-x <	C-x >
center current line	C-u C-l or C-l	
scroll other window	M-C v	
goto line	M-g	

Cut/Paste (Kill/Yank)

Entity to Kill	Backward	Forward
character	DEL	C-d
word	M-DEL	M-d
line (to end of)		C-k
sentence	C-x DEL	M-k

kill entire line

C-w
kill region (the equivalent of "cut")

M-w
copy region to kill ring (equivalent of "copy")

M-z char
kill through next occurrence of char

C-y
yank back last thing killed

M-y
replace last yank with previous kill

C-<, C->
Select to beginning, end of buffer

Undo/Redo

C-x u or **C-_** Undo

M-x redo

Transposition and Case Change

C-t (transpose-chars)
Transpose two characters

M-t (transpose-words)
Transpose two words

C-x C-t (transpose-lines)
Transpose two lines

C-x C-u (upcase region)
Make capitals

C-x C-l (downcase region)
Make lower case

Esc-c
Capitalize word

Esc-u, Esc-d
Uppcase word, downcase word

Accumulating Text in Buffers

(append-to-buffer)
Append region to the contents of a specified buffer.

(prepend-to-buffer)
Prepend region to the contents of a specified buffer.

(copy-to-buffer)
Copy region into a specified buffer, deleting that buffer's old contents.

(insert-buffer)
Insert the contents of a specified buffer into current buffer at point.

(append-to-file)
Append region to the contents of a specified file, at the end.

Formatting Margins, etc.

C-x . **(set-fill-prefix)**
Determines which character will start all lines (like >)

C-x f
Set margin (default: 70)

C-u 20 C-x f
Set margin to 20 characters.

M-q **(fill-region)**
Reformat a paragraph, hard wrapping text. Set using C-x f (auto-fill-mode)

(fill-individual-paragraphs)
Format several paragraphs, each individually

(fill-region-as-paragraph)
Format the entire region selected as one paragraph, combining individual paragraphs.

Editing, Spaces & Blank Lines

(canonically-space-region)
Remove extra spaces between words in region.

(checkdoc-rogue-spaces)
Find extra spaces at the end of lines in the current file.

M- **(delete-horizontal-space)**
Delete all spaces and tabs around point.

M-SPC **(just-one-space)**
Delete all spaces and tabs around point, leaving one space.

C-o
Insert blank line at cursor.

C-a C-o Tab
Insert indented line before the current line.

C-e C-j
Insert indented line after current line.

C-x C-o
Remove all blank lines except one

M-^ **(delete-indentation)**
Join current line to the previous line

Indentation and Tabs

TAB
Indent the current line "appropriately" according to mode.
In text mode, TAB key is set to indent-relative

C-j
Perform RET followed by TAB.

C-M-o **(split-line)**
Split the current line at point and move 2nd half downward

C-M- **(indent-region)**
Indent several lines to the same column

C-x TAB **(indent-rigidly)**
Shift a block of lines rigidly right or left

M-i **(tab-to-tab-stop)**
Indent from point to the next pre-specified tab stop column

(indent-relative)
Indent from point to under an indentation point in the previous line.

(edit-tab-stops)
Edit the tab stops

(tabify), (untabify)
Convert all spaces into appropriate # of tabs; replace all tabs with appropriate # of spaces.

Search/Replace and Incremental Search

C-s, C-r
Incremental search forward/backward

C-M-s
Regular expression search

C-M-r
Reverse regular expression search

M-p
Select previous search string

M-n
Select next later search string

RET
Exit incremental search

DEL
Undo effect of last character

C-g
Abort current search

Use C-s or C-r again to repeat the search in either direction. If Emacs is still searching, C-g cancels only the part not done.

Spelling

(flyspell-mode)
Toggle on the fly spell checking in this buffer

(flyspell-buffer)
Spell check the whole buffer

M-\$ **(ispell-word)**
Check and correct spelling of the word at point

M-TAB **(ispell-complete-word)**
Complete word before point based on the current dictionary

(ispell)
Spell-check the active region or the current buffer.

(ispell-buffer)
Check and correct spelling of each word in the buffer.

(ispell-region)
Check and correct spelling of each word in the region.

(ispell-change-dictionary)
Change the ispell dictionary to another language

Macros

C-x ((start-kbd-macro)
Start defining a keyboard macro

C-x) (end-kbd-macro)
End the definition of a keyboard macro

C-x e (call-last-kbd-macro)
Execute the most recent keyboard macro

C-u C-x (
Re-execute last keyboard macro, then edit

(name-last-kbd-macro)
Name for the session the most recently defined macro.

(insert-kbd-macro)
Insert in the buffer a macro's Lisp code.

C-x C-k
Edit a previously defined keyboard macro (edit-kbd-macro).

(apply-macro-to-region-lines)
Run the last keyboard macro on each complete line in the region.

Key Bindings

Add lines like the following in your .emacs file:

(global-set-key [f1] 'goto-line)
binds the key F1

(global-set-key [?\M-\l] 'next-line)
binds the key Alt-L

(global-set-key [?\C-x ?\w] 'beginning-of-buffer)
binds the key C-x w

Bookmarks

C-x r m
Set bookmark

(bookmark-jump)
Jump to a bookmark

Help

C-h k (describe key)
C-h b (describe-bindings)
C-h a (describe-apropos)

File Coding Systems (Translating DOS-Unix-Mac etc.)

C-x C-m C describe-coding-system
C-x C-m f set-buffer-file-coding-system
C-x C-m l set-language-environment
C-x C-m t set-terminal-coding-system
C-x C-m x set-selection-coding-system
C-x C-m C- set-input-method
C-x return C describe-coding-system
You can use return instead of C-m for any of these.

Some Cool Functions

Convert Dos to Unix Line Endings/Remove ^Ms

M-% C-q C-m Return C-q C-j Return

C-x C-m f undecided-unix

Remove Hard Wrapping

(defun unscrewup-paragraph (beg end)
(interactive "r")
(shell-command-on-region beg end "fmt -w2000" nil
t))

Remove messy indentation

C-u 0 C-M-\

Other Misc Stuff for .emacs file

(global-hl-line-mode 1)
(show-paren-mode t)
(setq transient-mark-mode t)

(tool-bar-mode -1)
(menu-bar-mode -1)

(set-default-font "-adobe-new century schoolbook-
bold-r-normal-14-140-75-75-p-87-iso8859-1")

Prefix text with a character like >

C-x .[do this on a line containing the char]
M-q [fill paragraph using fill prefix]

M-x means "hold down the ALT button and press X." C-u means "hold down the CTRL button and press u." Anything listed in parenthesis is a command accessed by typing M-x and then entering the name of the command.

Version history:

9 December 2008: Updates to macros, now based on emacs 22. Major reformat/reorganization
27 January 2005: Original version