

VS Code Essentials — Cheat Sheet

FREE CHEAT SHEET

One page from the complete **VS Code Essentials Companion Guide**. [Get the full guide →](#)

Shortcuts shown as **Win/Linux** / **Mac**.

Command Palette & Navigation

TASK	SHORTCUT
Command Palette	Ctrl+Shift+P / Cmd+Shift+P
Quick Open (go to file)	Ctrl+P / Cmd+P
Go to symbol in project	Ctrl+T / Cmd+T
Go to Definition	F12
Go to References	Shift+F12

Editing

TASK	SHORTCUT
Add cursor above/ below	Ctrl+Alt+Up/Down / Cmd+Option+Up/ Down
Select next occurrence	Ctrl+D / Cmd+D
Move line up/down	Alt+Up/Down / Option+Up/Down
Expand selection	Shift+Alt+Right / Shift+Option+Right
Format document	Shift+Alt+F / Shift+Option+F
Rename symbol	F2
Quick Fix	Ctrl+. / Cmd+.

Search & Replace

TASK	SHORTCUT
Find in file	Ctrl+F / Cmd+F
Find across project	Ctrl+Shift+F / Cmd+Shift+F
Replace in file	Ctrl+H / Cmd+Option+F

Panels & Views

TASK	SHORTCUT
Toggle terminal	Ctrl+` / Cmd+`
Toggle side bar	Ctrl+B / Cmd+B
Explorer	Ctrl+Shift+E / Cmd+Shift+E
Source Control	Ctrl+Shift+G / Cmd+Shift+G
Run and Debug	Ctrl+Shift+D / Cmd+Shift+D
Extensions	Ctrl+Shift+X / Cmd+Shift+X

Debugging

TASK	SHORTCUT
Start / continue	F5
Toggle breakpoint	F9
Step over / into / out	F10 / F11 / Shift+F11
Stop debugging	Shift+F5

Key Configuration Files

FILE	PURPOSE
.vscode/settings.json	Workspace settings
.vscode/tasks.json	Saved, runnable commands
.vscode/launch.json	Debug configurations
.vscode/extensions.json	Recommended extensions

Golden Rules

RULE

Learn the Command Palette first — everything else builds on it.

RULE

Workspace settings override user settings. Check `.vscode/settings.json` before assuming yours are broken.

RULE

Prefer Rename Symbol (`F2`) over Find & Replace for real code symbols.

RULE

Step over by default. Step into only when you suspect that specific function.

RULE

Review a project-wide search's matches before clicking Replace All.