

Sidebar

Programming · VS Code Workbench and Window Cheat Sheet

The `workbench.*`, `window.*`, `breadcrumbs.*` and `zenMode.*` settings: themes, zoom, layout, tabs and startup. Exact ID, what it does, and its default. Sheet 3 in the VS Code series.

THEMES & COLOURS

<code>workbench.colorTheme</code>	The colour theme by name, e.g. <code>"Default Dark Modern"</code>
<code>Ctrl+K Ctrl+T</code>	Opens the colour theme picker with a live preview
<code>window.autoDetectColorScheme</code>	<code>true</code> : follow the operating system's light/dark mode (off by default)
<code>workbench.preferredDarkColorTheme</code>	Theme used when the OS is in dark mode (needs the setting above)
<code>workbench.preferredLightColorTheme</code>	Theme used when the OS is in light mode
<code>workbench.iconTheme</code>	File icon theme for the Explorer and tabs; <code>null</code> turns file icons off
<code>workbench.productIconTheme</code>	Icon set for VS Code's own buttons and views
<code>workbench.colorCustomizations</code>	Override individual colours, e.g. <code>{ "editor.background": "#1e1e1e" }</code>

WINDOW & ZOOM

<code>window.zoomLevel</code>	Whole-window zoom; <code>0</code> is normal (default), each step is about 20%
<code>window.zoomPerWindow</code>	<code>true</code> (default): zoom applies to one window; <code>false</code> : to all
<code>Ctrl+= / Ctrl+- / Ctrl+0</code>	Zoom in / zoom out / reset zoom
<code>window.title</code>	Template for the window title, built from variables such as <code>\${rootName}</code>
<code>window.restoreWindows</code>	<code>preserve</code> , <code>all</code> (default), <code>folders</code> , <code>one</code> , <code>none</code> : what reopens at startup
<code>window.newWindowDimensions</code>	<code>default</code> (default), <code>inherit</code> , <code>offset</code> , <code>maximized</code> , <code>fullscreen</code>
<code>window.openFoldersInNewWindow</code>	<code>default</code> (default), <code>on</code> , <code>off</code>
<code>window.confirmBeforeClose</code>	<code>never</code> , <code>keyboardOnly</code> , <code>always</code> : ask before closing the window
<code>F11</code>	Toggle full screen

LAYOUT & BARS

<code>workbench.sidebar.location</code>	<code>left</code> (default) or <code>right</code>
<code>workbench.activityBar.location</code>	<code>default</code> (default), <code>top</code> , <code>bottom</code> , <code>hidden</code>
<code>workbench.statusBar.visible</code>	Show the bottom status bar (default <code>true</code>)
<code>workbench.panel.defaultLocation</code>	Where the Terminal/Problems panel sits: <code>bottom</code> (default), <code>left</code> , <code>top</code> , <code>right</code>
<code>window.menuBarVisibility</code>	<code>classic</code> (default), <code>visible</code> , <code>toggle</code> , <code>hidden</code> , <code>compact</code>
<code>window.commandCenter</code>	The search box in the title bar (default <code>true</code>)
<code>workbench.layoutControl.enabled</code>	Layout buttons in the title bar (default <code>true</code>)
<code>Ctrl+B / Ctrl+J</code>	Show or hide the side bar / the bottom panel

TABS

<code>workbench.editor.showTabs</code>	<code>multiple</code> (default), <code>single</code> , <code>none</code>
<code>workbench.editor.wrapTabs</code>	<code>true</code> : tabs wrap onto extra rows instead of scrolling (default <code>false</code>)
<code>workbench.editor.highlightModifiedTabs</code>	Extra marker on tabs with unsaved changes (default <code>false</code>)
<code>workbench.editor.tabActionLocation</code>	Side of the close button: <code>right</code> (default) or <code>left</code>
<code>workbench.editor.labelFormat</code>	Tab labels: <code>default</code> , <code>short</code> , <code>medium</code> , <code>long</code> (how much of the path to show)
<code>workbench.editor.pinnedTabsOnSeparateRow</code>	Pinned tabs get their own row (default <code>false</code>)
<code>workbench.editor.limit.enabled</code>	<code>true</code> : close the oldest tabs beyond a limit (default <code>false</code>)
<code>workbench.editor.limit.value</code>	How many tabs to keep when the limit is on (default 10)
<code>workbench.editor.openPositioning</code>	Where new tabs open: <code>right</code> (default), <code>left</code> , <code>first</code> , <code>last</code>

PREVIEW TABS & EDITOR GROUPS

<code>workbench.editor.enablePreview</code>	<code>true</code> (default): a single click opens a reusable <i>preview</i> tab (italic title)
<code>workbench.editor.enablePreviewFromQuickOpen</code>	Quick Open also uses preview tabs (default <code>false</code>)
<code>workbench.editor.closeOnFileDelete</code>	Close the tab when its file is deleted (default <code>false</code>)
<code>workbench.editor.splitInGroupLayout</code>	Direction of a split inside a group: <code>horizontal</code> (default) or <code>vertical</code>
<code>Ctrl+\<code></code></code>	Split the editor to the side
<code>workbench.editor.restoreViewState</code>	Remember scroll and cursor position per file (default <code>true</code>)

STARTUP & EMPTY WINDOW

<code>workbench.startupEditor</code>	<code>none</code> , <code>welcomePage</code> (default), <code>readme</code> , <code>newUntitledFile</code> , <code>welcomePageInEmptyWorkbench</code> , <code>terminal</code>
<code>workbench.editor.empty.hint</code>	Hint text in an empty editor area: <code>text</code> (default) or <code>hidden</code>

BREADCRUMBS & ZEN MODE

`breadcrumbs.enabled` Path bar above the editor (default `true`)

`breadcrumbs.filePath` `on` (default), `off` , `last`

`Ctrl+K Z` Toggle Zen Mode (press Esc twice to leave it)

`zenMode.centerLayout` Center the editor in Zen Mode (default `true`)

`zenMode.hideLineNumbers` Hide line numbers in Zen Mode (default `true`)

`zenMode.hideStatusBar` Hide the status bar in Zen Mode (default `true`)

`zenMode.showTabs` `multiple` (default), `single` , `none`

`zenMode.silentNotifications` Suppress pop-up notifications in Zen Mode (default `true`)

MOTION & ACCESSIBILITY

`workbench.reduceMotion` `auto` (default, follows the OS), `on` , `off` : fewer animations

`workbench.reduceTransparency` `off` (default), `on` , `auto`

`window.zoomLevel` Also the quickest way to make everything bigger

A REASONABLE STARTER SET (MY SUGGESTIONS, NOT DEFAULTS)

`"window.autoDetectColorScheme": true` Light by day, dark by night, set by your OS

`"workbench.editor.enablePreview": false` No surprise tab replacement, if preview tabs annoy you

`"workbench.editor.highlightModifiedTabs": true` Unsaved tabs are easy to spot

`"workbench.editor.wrapTabs": true` See every open tab at once

`"workbench.startupEditor": "none"` Skip the Welcome page

`"window.confirmBeforeClose": "keyboardOnly"` Guards against an accidental Ctrl+W/Ctrl+Q

`"workbench.editor.labelFormat": "short"` Shows the folder name when two tabs share a file name

WHY DOES MY TAB KEEP DISAPPEARING? PREVIEW TABS

With `workbench.editor.enablePreview` on (the default), a single click in the Explorer opens a *preview* tab with an *italic* title. Opening another file by single click replaces it. Double-click the file or the tab, or start editing, to keep the tab open. If you prefer every file to get its own tab, set `"workbench.editor.enablePreview": false`.

COLOUR OVERRIDES CAN BE SET PER THEME

`workbench.colorCustomizations` applies to every theme. To change colours for one theme only, put them inside a block named after it: `{ "[Default Dark Modern]": { "editor.background": "#101820" } }`.