

Sidebar

Programming · Windows Terminal Cheat Sheet

Windows Terminal: default key bindings, the settings in `settings.json`, profiles, actions and the wt command line. Checked against the 1.24 release's schema and default settings, the documentation, and the copy installed here (1.24.11911.0). Not a VS Code sheet, but it sits well beside the VS Code terminal sheet.

GETTING AROUND & SETTINGS FILES

<code>Ctrl+,</code>	Open the Settings page (the graphical settings)
<code>Ctrl+Shift+,</code>	Open <code>settings.json</code> (the file you edit by hand)
<code>Ctrl+Alt+,</code>	Open <code>defaults.json</code> : read-only list of every default setting and key binding
<code>Ctrl+Shift+P</code>	Command palette: run any action by name
<code>Ctrl+Shift+Space</code>	Open the new-tab dropdown (all your profiles)
<code>Alt+Enter</code> or <code>F11</code>	Full screen on and off
<code>Win+`</code> (<code>backtick</code>)	Quake mode: a drop-down terminal window from the top of the screen
<code>Alt+Space</code>	The window's system menu
<code>settings.json</code> location	<code>%LOCALAPPDATA%\Packages\Microsoft.WindowsTerminal_8wekyb3d8bbwe\LocalState\settings.json</code> for the Store version (found on this machine; version 1.24)
<code>"\$schema"</code>	The first lines of <code>settings.json</code> point to <code>https://aka.ms/terminal-profiles-schema</code> , which gives VS Code completion and checking when you edit the file

TABS & WINDOWS (DEFAULTS)

<code>Ctrl+Shift+T</code>	New tab v
<code>Ctrl+Shift+1 ... 9</code>	New
<code>Ctrl+Shift+D</code>	Duplicate
<code>Ctrl+Tab</code> / <code>Ctrl+Shift+</code>	
<code>Ctrl+Alt+1 ... 8</code>	Switch
<code>Ctrl+Shift+N</code>	New wind
<code>Ctrl+Shift+W</code>	Close the
<code>Alt+F4</code>	Close the window

PANES (DEFAULT KEYS)

<code>Alt+Shift+-</code>	Split the pane, duplicating it, with the new pane below
<code>Alt+Shift++</code>	Split the pane, duplicating it, with the new pane to the right
<code>Alt+Shift+D</code>	Split in the best direction: <i>not a default</i> ; it is the key bound in your <code>settings.json</code> (action <code>Terminal.DuplicatePaneAuto</code>)
<code>Alt+Arrow</code> keys	Move focus to the pane up, down, left or right
<code>Ctrl+Alt+Left</code>	Move focus to the previous pane
<code>Alt+Shift+Arrow</code> keys	Resize the focused pane

COPY, PASTE & SELECTION

<code>Ctrl+Shift+C</code> / <code>Ctrl+In</code>	
<code>Ctrl+Shift+V</code> / <code>Shift+I</code>	
<code>Ctrl+C</code> and <code>Ctrl+V</code>	Reb inte
<code>Ctrl+Shift+A</code>	Select all
<code>Ctrl+Shift+M</code>	Mark mod
<code>copyOnSelect</code>	<code>true</code> co
<code>copyFormatting</code>	Copy c
<code>trimPaste</code> / <code>trimBlockS</code>	
<code>warning.multiLinePaste</code>	
<code>wordDelimiters</code>	Charac
<code>Menu</code> key	Shows the con

SCROLLING, SEARCH & ZOOM

- Ctrl+Shift+FFind text in the output
- Ctrl+Shift+Up / DownScroll a line up / down
- Ctrl+Shift+PgUp / PgDnScroll a page up / down
- Ctrl+Shift+Home / EndScroll to the top / bottom
- Ctrl+Shift+KClear the whole buffer
- Ctrl+Plus / Ctrl+Minus / Ctrl+0Make the font larger / smaller / reset it
- historySizeLines of scroll-back (default 9001)
- snapOnInputJump to the bottom when you type (default true)
- scrollbarStatevisible (default), hidden , always
- experimental.scrollToZoomCtrl + mouse wheel changes the font size (default true)
- experimental.scrollToChangeOpacityCtrl + Shift + mouse wheel changes the opacity (default true)

LOOK OF THE WINDOW (GLOBAL SETTINGS)

- themedark (default), light , system or the name of a theme in themes
- showTabsInTitlebarPut the tabs in the title bar (default true)
- alwaysShowTabsShow the tab row even with one tab (default true)
- tabWidthModeequal (default), compact , titleLength
- tabSwitcherModeinOrder (default), mru , disabled : how Ctrl+Tab behaves
- useAcrylicInTabRowFrosted-glass tab row (default false)
- disableAnimationsTurn off visual animations (default false)
- focusFollowMouseFocus the pane under the mouse (default false)
- snapToGridOnResizeResize the window in whole character steps (default false)
- autoHideWindowHide the window when it loses focus (default false)
- languageInterface language as a BCP-47 tag such as en-GB (default: the system's)

STARTUP & WINDOW (GLOBAL SETTINGS)

- defaultProfileThe profile used by default
- launchModedefault , auto , manual
- initialCols / initialRowsInitial width and height
- initialPosition / centerInitial position of the window
- firstWindowPreferenceWhether to open a new window or activate an existing one
- windowingBehaviorusurp , share , separate
- startupActionsActions to perform when the terminal starts
- newTabPositionafter , before
- alwaysOnTopKeep the window on top of other windows
- minimizeToNotificationAreaWhether to minimize to the notification area
- showCloseButtonWhether to show the close button
- warning.confirmCloseAllWhether to confirm before closing all windows
- showAdminShieldShow the admin shield

PROFILES: WHAT STARTS WHEN YOU OPEN A PROFILE

- profiles.listOne entry per profile
- name / guidThe label in the tab bar
- commandlineThe program to run
- startingDirectoryFolder to start in
- sourceMarks a profile as the source of the current session
- hiddenHide a profile from the list
- elevateAlways open this profile with elevated permissions
- closeOnExitautomatic , manual
- tabTitle / suppressAppTitleWhether to show the tab title
- tabColor / iconColour and icon of the tab
- environmentExtra environment variables
- pathTranslationStyleWhether to translate paths
- Your profilesWindow title for this mac

PROFILE APPEARANCE

colorScheme	Name of a scheme from <code>schemes</code> (default <code>Campbell</code>)
font	<code>{ "face": "Cascadia Mono", "size": 12, "weight": "normal" }</code> (these are the defaults)
font.features / font.axes	OpenType features and variable-font axes, e.g. <code>{ "liga": 1 }</code>
font.cellWidth / font.cellHeight	Adjust spacing between characters / lines
cursorShape	<code>bar</code> (default), <code>underscore</code> , <code>doubleUnderscore</code> , <code>filledBox</code> , <code>emptyBox</code> , <code>vintage</code>
cursorHeight / cursorColor	Height in percent for <code>vintage</code> (default 25) / cursor colour
opacity / useAcrylic	Window transparency 0 to 100 (default 100) / frosted-glass effect (default <code>false</code>)
padding	Space around the text (default <code>8, 8, 8, 8</code>)
background / foreground	Override the scheme's colours with <code>#rrggbb</code> values
backgroundImage	A picture behind the text; with <code>backgroundImageOpacity</code> (default 1.0), <code>backgroundImageStretchMode</code> (default <code>uniformToFill</code>) and <code>backgroundImageAlignment</code> (default <code>center</code>)
intenseTextStyle	<code>bright</code> (default), <code>bold</code> , <code>all</code> , <code>none</code>
adjustIndistinguishableColors	<code>never</code> (default), <code>indexed</code> , <code>always</code> ; make hard-to-read colour pairs readable
antialiasingMode	<code>grayscale</code> (default), <code>cleartype</code> , <code>aliased</code>
bellStyle	<code>audible</code> (default), or <code>window</code> , <code>taskbar</code> , <code>all</code> , <code>none</code>
unfocusedAppearance	A set of appearance settings used while the pane is not focused

ACTIONS & KEY BINDING

"keybindings": [...]	
"actions": [...]	Defin...
	{ "
Key names	<code>ctrl</code> , <code>alt</code>
Remove a default key	
Common actions	<code>newTa</code> <code>renam</code> <code>sendI</code>
splitPane	<code>{ "action"</code>
newTab with a profile	
multipleActions	Run s...

THE WT COMMAND LINE

wt	Start Windows Terminal from any shell; <code>wt -h</code> lists the help
wt -p "Debian"	Open a profile by name
wt -d C:\path	Start in a folder
new-tab (nt) split-pane (sp)	Subcommands; options include <code>-p</code> profile, <code>-d</code> folder, <code>--title</code> , <code>--tabColor</code> , <code>--colorScheme</code>
sp -H / sp -V	Split horizontally / vertically; <code>-s .4</code> sets the new pane's share; <code>-D</code> duplicates the pane
focus-tab -t 1	Focus a tab by its number (starting from 0); also <code>move-focus</code> , <code>move-pane</code> , <code>swap-pane</code>
wt -w 0 nt	New tab in the most recently used window; <code>-w -1</code> new window; <code>-w name</code> a named window
-M -F -f	Start maximised / full screen / in focus mode; also <code>--pos x,y</code> and <code>--size c,r</code>
;(semicolon)	Separates commands in one line. In PowerShell write <code>`;</code> (backtick, semicolon) or put <code>--%</code> after <code>wt</code>
Dev layout example	<code>wt -p "Debian" ; sp -V -p "Windows PowerShell" ; nt -d C:\ --title Build</code> (cmd syntax)

ADDING YOUR OWN SH

Git Bash profile (my k
WSL starting in your L
PowerShell 7 (my knowl
Hide profiles you neve
Same look everywhere

A REASONABLE STARTER SET (MY SUGGESTIONS, NOT DEFAULTS)

"profiles": { "defaults": { "font": { "face": "Cascadia Code", "size": 12 } } }	One font for every shell (Cascadia Code ships with Windows Terminal)
"copyOnSelect": true	Select to copy
"historySize": 20000	More scroll-back for long builds
"newTabPosition": "afterCurrentTab"	New tabs open beside the one you are in
"warning.multilinePaste": true	Keep the safety prompt when pasting several lines (the default)
"defaultProfile": "Debian"	If you live in WSL, make it the default

EDITED SETTINGS.JSON AND NOTHING CHANGED?

Windows Terminal reloads `settings.json` when you save it, so look for an error message at the top of the window. A missing comma, a stray quote or a wrong value stops the new settings being applied. Because the file starts with the `$schema` line, VS Code underlines such mistakes when you open it there. If you are really stuck, the graphical Settings page (Ctrl+,) writes valid JSON for you.

CTRL+C: COPY OR INTERRUPT?

In a terminal Ctrl+C normally means *stop the running program*. With Ctrl+C bound to copy, as in your settings, it copies only when text is selected and otherwise still sends the interrupt, so you can use it both ways. Ctrl+Shift+C always copies, whatever the selection. In WSL and other Linux shells the same Ctrl+C interrupt applies.