VI Basic Commands

Summary of most useful commands

Entering command mode
[Esc]   Exit editing mode. Keyboard keys now interpreted as commands.

Moving the cursor
h   (or left arrow key) move the cursor left.
l   (or left arrow key) move the cursor right.
i   (or down arrow key) move the cursor down.
k   (or up arrow key) move the cursor up.
[Ctrl] f   move the cursor one page forward.
[Ctrl] b   move the cursor one page backward.
^   move cursor to the first non-white character in the current line.
$ move the cursor to the end of the current line.
G   go to the last line in the file.
nG   go to line number n.
[Ctrl] G   display the name of the current file and the cursor position in it.

Entering editing mode
i   insert new text before the cursor.
a   append new text after the cursor.
o   start to edit a new line after the current one.
O   start to edit a new line before the current one.

Replacing characters, lines and words
r   replace the current character (does not enter edit mode).
s   enter edit mode and substitute the current character by several ones.
cw   enter edit mode and change the word after the cursor.
C   enter edit mode and change the rest of the line after the cursor.

Copying and pasting
yy   copy (yank) the current line to the copy/paste buffer.
p   paste the copy/paste buffer after the current line.
P   Paste the copy/paste buffer before the current line.

Deleting characters, words and lines
All deleted characters, words and lines are copied to the copy/paste buffer.
x   delete the character at the cursor location.
dw   delete the current word.
D   delete the remainder of the line after the cursor.
dd   delete the current line.

Repeating commands
.   repeat the last insertion, replacement or delete command.

Looking for strings
/string   find the first occurrence of string after the cursor.
?string   find the first occurrence of string before the cursor.
n   find the next occurrence in the last search.

Replacing strings
Can also be done manually, searching and replacing once, and then using n (next occurrence) and . (repeat last edit).
n,ps/str1/str2/g   between line numbers n and p, substitute all (g: global) occurrences of str1 by str2.
1,$s/str1/str2/g   in the whole file ($: last line), substitute all occurrences of str1 by str2.

Applying a command several times – Examples
5j   move the cursor 5 lines down.
30dd   delete 30 lines.
4cw   change 4 words from the cursor.
1G   go to the first line in the file.

Misc
[Ctrl] l   redraw the screen.
J   join the current line with the next one

Exiting and saving
ZZ   save current file and exit vi.
:w   write (save) to the current file.
:w file   write (save) to the file file.
:q!   quit vi without saving changes.

Going further
Learn more by taking the quick tutorial:
just type vimtutor.