Selecting Text in the Editor

The basic way to select a piece of text is to extend the selection with the mouse cursor. IntelliJ IDEA, as a keyboard-centric IDE, suggests to use navigation keys to make selections. You can opt to select pieces of text by lines, or select rectangular fragments in the column mode, extend and shrink the selection, and use sticky selection.

In this section:

- Selecting all text in the active editor tab
- Selecting with navigation keys
- Extending selection
- Toggling between selection modes
- Using the column selection mode
- Using smart selection
- Toggling sticky selection

To select the entire text in the current editor tab, do one of the following

- On the main menu, choose **Edit | Select All**.
- Press `Ctrl+A`.

To select text with navigation keys, use one of the following shortcuts

- `Ctrl+Shift+Left`, `Ctrl+Shift+Right` to select text from the caret position to the beginning/end of the current word.
- `Ctrl+Shift+Page Up`, `Ctrl+Shift+Page Down` to select text from the caret position to the top/bottom of the screen.

To extend selection from the word at the caret to the piece of code the caret is contained in, use the following shortcuts

- Press `Ctrl+W` to select the word where the caret is currently located.
- Press `Ctrl+W` successively to extend selection to the next containing node (for example, an expression, a paired tag, an entire conditional block, a method body, a class, a group of vararg arguments, etc.)

  While extending selection, keep in mind the following:

  - Pressing `Ctrl+W` successively in *plain text* or *comments* extends the selection first to the current sentence, then to the current paragraph.
  - Pressing `Ctrl+W` successively in a method call that contains vararg arguments, first selects a vararg argument the caret rests at, then the whole group of vararg arguments, and then all arguments in the method call.

- Press `Ctrl+Shift+W` to shrink selection in the reverse order (from the outermost container to the word where the caret currently resides).

  > The selection extends or shrinks according to capitalization, if the **Use "CamelHumps" words** is enabled on the Editor. Smart Keys settings page.
  >
  > If you want to make selection according to capitalization, using double-click, make sure that the option **Honor CamelHumps words...** is selected on the Editor settings page.

To toggle between the line and the column selection modes, do one of the following

- On the main menu, choose **Edit | Column Selection Mode**.

- On the context menu of the editor, choose **Column Selection Mode**.

- Press `Shift+Alt+Insert`.

- Keeping the middle mouse button pressed, drag the mouse.

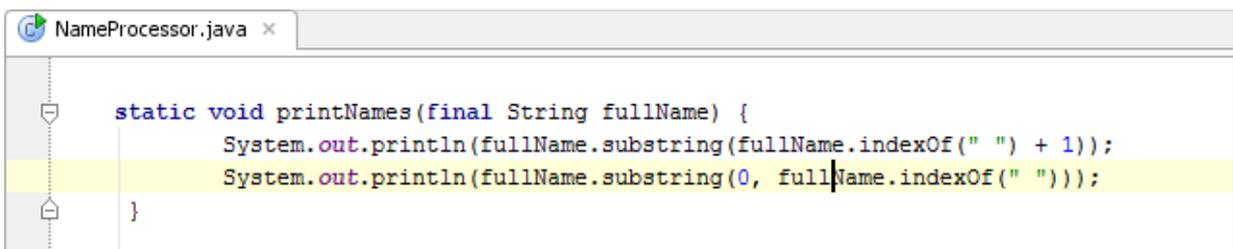**To make selection in the column selection mode**

- Keeping the `Alt` key pressed, drag your mouse pointer to select the desired area.

- Keeping the middle mouse button pressed, drag your mouse pointer to select the desired area.

To use smart expression selection

When you perform various code refactorings that involve selecting an expression , IntelliJ IDEA can help you select the expression of interest. This feature is known as smart expression selection.
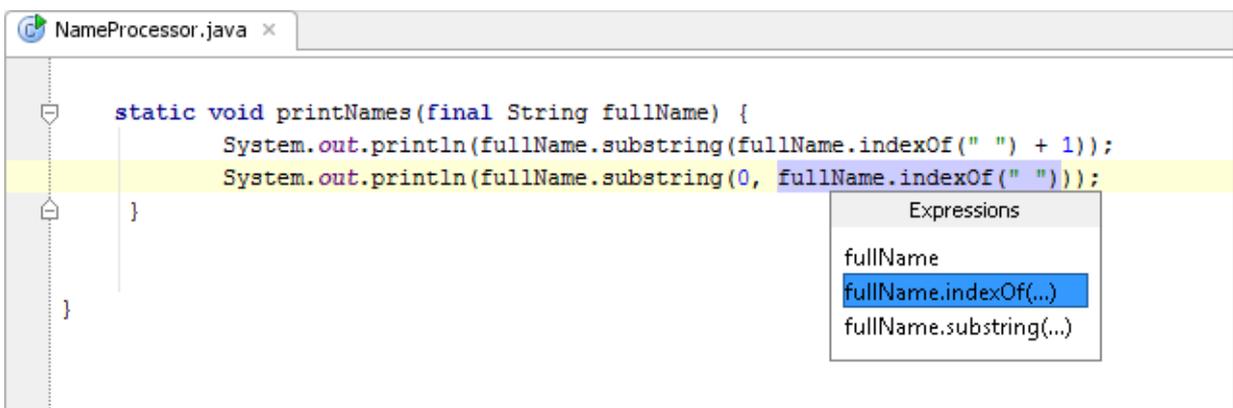
The procedure for the Introduce Variable refactoring is just an example. The smart expression selection feature, in fact, is available in all the refactorings that start with selecting an expression.

1. Place the cursor before or within the expression.

2. Choose **Refactor | Extract Variable** from the main or the context menu, or press `Ctrl+Alt+V`.

3. In the **Expressions** pop-up menu, select the expression. To do that, click the required expression. Alternatively, use the `Up` and `Down` arrow keys to navigate to the expression of interest, and then press `Enter` to select it.
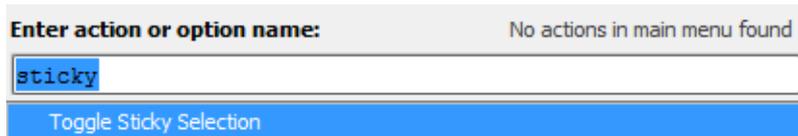
To toggle sticky selection, do one of the following

■ Press `Ctrl+Shift+A`, in the pop-up frame type *sticky*, and choose **Toggle Sticky Selection** from the suggestion list:

Enter action or option name:	No actions in main menu found
sticky	
Toggle Sticky Selection	

■ In the *Emacs* keymap, use keyboard shortcut `Ctrl+Space`.

> When sticky selection is on, you can turn it off by invoking copy or cut, or by toggling it again.

See Also

Procedures:

■ Configuring IDE Settings

■ Extract Variable

Reference:

■ Editor

■ Keyboard Shortcuts and Mouse Reference

Web Resources:

■ Developer Community 🔗