

Settings and layouts

MolDraw Docs · LabCanvas · 4 pages · moldraw.com/docs/

Settings reference

Short answer: Click the gear button (Settings) to open the Settings window. It has eight sections: General, Style, Bonds, Style presets, AI, Plugins, Shortcuts and Touch screen. Changes save automatically, and each section has a Reset to defaults button.

Where to find it

- 1 Click the gear button (**Settings**). In the command palette, type "settings" and pick a section, such as **Settings: Bonds**.
- 2 Pick a section in the left list. On a computer, type in **Search** at the top of the list to jump to a setting.
- 3 Change a value. The footer shows **Changes save automatically**.
- 4 To undo your changes in one section, click **Reset to defaults**, then click again to confirm.

Reset all settings... at the bottom of the list resets every section. It also asks for a second click. Settings live in this browser, on this device. See Privacy and storage.

The **Previews** switch in the General, Style and Bonds sections shows a small example structure under options that change the drawing. It is off by default.

General

Appearance

Setting	What it does	Default
Language	Interface language. See Change the language.	Your browser language on the first visit, else English
Theme	Light , Elegant dark or Ink dark . Ink dark uses a black canvas with white bonds and atom letters.	Light

Setting	What it does	Default
Layout	Scientific shows every button. Educational shows two compact rows and one tool column. See Themes and layouts.	Scientific
Toolbar icon size	Small, Medium, Large or Extra large. Buttons and gaps scale too. Computers only.	Small

Atom labels

Setting	What it does	Default
Show explicit H labels	Draws hydrogens on carbons for display. It does not add real H atoms.	Off
Color atom labels by element	N blue, O red and so on. Colors you paint always apply. The 3D viewer always uses element colors.	Off
Color bonds to heteroatoms	Bonds to N, O and other heteroatoms take the label color.	Off
Condensed group labels	Terminal groups show labels such as CH ₃ or NH ₂ .	Off
R/S and E/Z labels	Shows CIP labels on stereocenters and double bonds.	Off

Drawing

Setting	What it does	Default
Auto-layout after bond burst	When you add several bonds quickly, MolDraw tidies that fragment, like Clean up.	On
Legacy accelerator for 2D layout	An older layout path that Clean up and SMILES to 2D can try for hard ring systems. Turn it off to use only the built-in layout.	On
Lone pair style	Dots or Line (a short bar) for new lone pairs.	Dots

Teaching

Setting	What it does	Default
Structure display	Skeletal formula or Lewis structure . Only the view changes.	Skeletal formula

Setting	What it does	Default
Free sketch mode	Relaxes chemistry rules. Five switches appear under it, all on: No automatic hydrogens , No valence correction , Allow any charge (up to ± 9), Allow any number of lone pairs (up to four) and Allow any number of bonds .	Off
Show errors	Amber dot on atoms with too many bonds, amber ring on unclear wedge or dash stereo. Never exported.	On
Error tooltips	Hover or tap a marked atom to read the error. Shown when Show errors is on.	On
Preview the next atom	A faint bond and atom show where the next click adds an atom.	On in Scientific, off in Educational

For teaching use, see Educational layout and Teaching menu.

Canvas

Setting	What it does	Default
Snap to grid	Dragged molecules and reaction arrows snap to the grid. Hold Shift to move freely.	Off
Show grid	Draws a light grid on the canvas.	Off
Canvas assistance guidelines	Alignment lines while you drag, and snap ticks while you draw bonds.	On
Snap curved arrows	Curved arrows attach to lone pairs, bonds and atoms and move with the structure. Hold Alt to place an end freely.	On

Export

Setting	What it does	Default
Reaction component margin size	Space around reaction parts, 0 to 24 pt.	1.6 pt
Image resolution	1× (match font size), low (2×), medium (3×) or high (4×). Applies to white PNG, JPEG and PDF. Transparent PNG and SVG stay 1×.	high (4×)

Style

These change how structures look. The Style ribbon has the same controls. See [Style and display](#).

Setting	What it does	Default
Structure theme	Default (skeletal) or Ball and stick . Plugins can add more.	Default
Font	Font for atom labels, such as Times New Roman, Arial or Helvetica.	Times New Roman
Bold atom labels	Element and group labels in bold.	Off
Font size	Label size at zoom 1, 6 to 36 px.	20 px
Sub font size	Subscript size, 6 to 36 px.	16 px
Bond length	24 to 80 px.	45 px
Fixed bond length	New bonds snap to the bond length while you drag. Off lets you drag any length.	On
Bond spacing	Gap between double bond lines, 4 to 45 % of length.	35 %
Bond thickness	1 to 14 px.	1.5 px
Stereo (Wedge) bond width	2 to 24 px.	10 px
Hash spacing	0.5 to 14 px.	3.5 px

Bonds

Setting	What it does	Default
Fixed bond length	Same switch as in Style.	On
Bond angle snap	New bonds and rings snap to this angle, 5 to 45°. Use 15° for RSC style and 30° for ACS or Nature.	30°

Style presets

One click sets bond and label values for a journal or for slides. Each card shows aspirin in that style. The presets are **Balanced (screen)**, **ACS 1996**, **ACS, large labels**, **Large (17 pt)**, **RSC**, **Nature Portfolio**, **Nature Chemistry (classic)** and **Slides & posters**. The default is Balanced (screen). For journal figures, see Publication-ready figures.

AI, Plugins and Shortcuts

- **AI** sets the **Chat provider** (Gemini, Claude, OpenAI or DeepSeek), the **Model** and an API key for each provider. Gemini is the default. Keys stay in this browser. See AI providers and API keys. This section also has the **Local session bridge** for AI agents, off by default.
- **Plugins** lists every plugin with **Install**, **Enable**, **Disable** and **Uninstall**. You need to sign in to install plugins. See Plugins overview.
- **Shortcuts** lists every key. Click **Edit**, then press a new key. **Esc** cancels. **Reset all shortcuts** restores the defaults. See Keyboard shortcuts.

Touch screen

Setting	What it does	Default
One-finger pan on empty canvas	With the Select tool, one finger on empty canvas pans instead of drawing a selection box.	Off
Magnifier while drawing	A 2× loupe above your fingertip while you drag a bond, ring or chain.	On
Pointer debug overlay	Shows pen and touch details on the canvas. For testing devices.	Off

See Phone and tablet for gestures.

Tips

- On a phone, Settings opens full screen. Turn on **Show descriptions** at the top to read the help text under each option. **Reset defaults** sits at the bottom.
- If the canvas looks wrong after many changes, reset only the section you changed.

Questions and answers

How do I reset MolDraw settings to default?

Open Settings and click Reset to defaults in the section you changed, then click again to confirm. Reset all settings at the bottom of the list resets every section.

Why did my settings disappear?

Settings are stored in your browser. A private window, another browser or clearing site data starts from the defaults again.

What is the default bond length in MolDraw?

The default bond length is 45 px with a 30 degree angle snap. Change both in Settings, Style and Bonds.

Do settings sync between my devices?

No. Each browser keeps its own settings. Set them again on each device, or use a style preset to get the same look in one click.

Source: <https://www.moldraw.com/docs/settings/moldraw-settings-reference/>

Command palette

Short answer: Press Ctrl+K (Cmd+K on a Mac) to open the command palette. Type a few letters of any action, tool, export format or settings section, then press Enter to run it.

The command palette is a search box for the whole editor. It reaches commands that sit deep in menus, so you can keep your hands on the keyboard.

- 1 Press **Ctrl** + **K**. On a Mac, press **Cmd** + **K**.
- 2 Type part of a command, such as "clean" or "svg".
- 3 Press **↓** or **↑** to move through the results.
- 4 Press **Enter** to run the command. Press **Esc** to close the palette.

Ctrl + **K** works anywhere in the editor, even while you type in a text box. Press it again to close the palette. You can also click a result with the mouse.

Command groups

Group	What it holds	Examples
Recent	The last five commands you ran. Shown when the search box is empty.	
Edit	Undo, redo, copy, paste and delete	Paste SMILES, Clear canvas
Structure	Chemistry actions on the drawing	Clean up structure, 3D clean up, Aromatize, Check structure, Automap reaction atoms, Reaction stoichiometry table
Select	Smart selections	Select all rings, Select heteroatoms, Select wedge / dash bonds, Invert selection
Tools	Every drawing tool, and "Place element" for C, N, O, S, P, F, Cl, Br, I and H	Place element N

Group	What it holds	Examples
File	New design, save and copy	New design, Save MolDraw file, My designs, Copy SVG
Download	One command per export format	Download PNG, Download Molfile, Download chemfig (LaTeX)
View	Zoom, panels, grid and theme	Fit drawing to view, Show or hide 3D viewer, Theme: Ink dark
Settings	Opens one section of Settings	Settings: Style presets
Help	Help and feedback	Keyboard shortcuts, What's new, Request a feature

Commands that cannot run right now are hidden. For example, **Undo** does not show when there is nothing to undo.

Search examples

Type	You get
<code>clean</code>	Clean up structure and 3D clean up
<code>cdxml</code>	Download ChemDraw XML
<code>acs</code>	Settings: Style presets
<code>dark</code>	Theme: Elegant dark and Theme: Ink dark
<code>rings</code>	Select all rings, ring tools
<code>mw</code>	Add analysis to canvas

The search also looks at hidden keywords. "export", "save as" or a file extension finds the Download commands. "chirality" finds **Show or hide R/S and E/Z labels**.

Tips

- Commands that have a shortcut show the keys on the right. Learn them from there. See Keyboard shortcuts.
- Use **Place element** to pick elements that are not in your current atom palette row.
- Use **Settings:** commands to open the Settings window on the right section.

- Command names are in English in every interface language.
- The palette needs a keyboard. On a phone or tablet without one, use the menus. See Phone and tablet.

Questions and answers

What is the shortcut for the MolDraw command palette?

Press Ctrl+K on Windows and Linux, or Cmd+K on a Mac. Press it again or press Esc to close it.

Can I change the command palette shortcut?

No. Ctrl+K and Cmd+K are fixed. You can change most other shortcuts in Settings, Shortcuts.

Why is a command missing from the palette?

Commands that cannot run right now are hidden. For example, Undo is hidden when there is nothing to undo.

Source: <https://www.moldraw.com/docs/settings/how-to-use-the-command-palette/>

Change the language

Short answer: Click the language button (a flag and the language name) at the top right and pick a language, or open Settings, General, Language. MolDraw has 18 interface languages. You can also open the editor in a language with its own address, such as moldraw.com/de/ for German.

Where to find it

- 1 Click the language button at the top right of the editor. It shows a flag and the current language.
- 2 Pick your language from the list. The interface changes at once.
- 3 MolDraw remembers your choice in this browser.

Other places to change the language:

- **Settings, General, Language.** See Settings reference.
- The account menu (your avatar), **Language**, when you are signed in.
- In the Educational layout, the  menu, **Language**.
- On a phone, the  menu. Tap a language chip. See Phone and tablet.

Supported languages

Language	Shown as	Editor address
English	English	/
German	Deutsch	/de/
Spanish	Español	/es/
French	Français	/fr/
Italian	Italiano	/it/
Portuguese	Português	/pt/
Dutch	Nederlands	/nl/

Language	Shown as	Editor address
Polish	Polski	/pl/
Turkish	Türkçe	/tr/
Russian	Русский	/ru/
Indonesian	Bahasa Indonesia	/id/
Vietnamese	Tiếng Việt	/vi/
Thai	ไทย	/th/
Japanese	日本語	/ja/
Korean	한국어	/ko/
Chinese (Simplified)	简体中文	/zh/
Chinese (Traditional)	繁體中文	/zh-hant/
Arabic	العربية	/ar/

How MolDraw picks the language

1. A language you picked in the app always wins.
2. If you have not picked one, a language address such as `/es/` opens the editor in that language.
3. On your first visit, MolDraw uses your browser language. A Malay browser gets Indonesian.
4. Otherwise the editor is in English.

When you switch language in the app, the address bar changes to match, for example from `/` to `/de/`. Share that link and others open the editor in the same language. Your drawing stays on the canvas when you switch.

What is translated

Menus, buttons, tool names and Settings are translated. A few newer labels may still show in English until their translation is added. Command palette names stay in English. Chemistry content does not change: element symbols, SMILES and IUPAC names are the same in every language.

Tips

- Use a language address in course notes, so students open the editor in their own language.
- If the language does not change when you open `/de/`, you picked another language in the app before. Pick German once in the language menu.

Questions and answers

How do I change MolDraw to English?

Click the flag button at the top right and pick English, or open Settings, General, Language and pick English.

Does changing the language clear my drawing?

No. The canvas and your saved designs stay the same. Only the interface text changes.

Why does `moldraw.com/de/` still open in English?

A language you picked in the app wins over the address. Pick Deutsch once in the language menu to switch.

Can I use MolDraw in Arabic or Chinese?

Yes. Arabic, Simplified Chinese and Traditional Chinese are in the language list, with the addresses `/ar/`, `/zh/` and `/zh-hant/`.

Source: <https://www.moldraw.com/docs/settings/how-to-change-the-language-of-moldraw/>

Themes and layouts

Short answer: MolDraw has three themes: Light, Elegant dark and Ink dark. Click the sun or moon button in the top bar to cycle through them, or pick one in Settings, General, Theme. The Layout setting switches between Scientific, with every button in view, and Educational, with two compact rows.

Change the theme

- 1 Click the sun or moon button in the top bar.
- 2 Each click moves to the next theme: Light, then Elegant dark, then Ink dark, then Light again.
- 3 To pick one directly, open **Settings, General, Theme** and click a thumbnail.

You can also change the theme from the account menu when you are signed in. The command palette has **Theme: Light**, **Theme: Elegant dark** and **Theme: Ink dark**.

Theme	Look	Good for
Light	Light interface, black structures on a white canvas	Papers, printing, bright rooms
Elegant dark	Soft charcoal interface, light bonds on a dark canvas	Long sessions, dark rooms
Ink dark	Near black interface and canvas, white bonds and atom letters	Projectors, high contrast

Light is the default. The theme changes the interface and the canvas. It does not change the colors you painted on atoms or bonds.

On a phone or tablet

Open the  menu at the top right. Under **Theme**, pick **System**, **Light** or **Dark**. System follows your device setting. Dark uses Elegant dark, or keeps Ink dark if you already use it. See Phone and tablet.

Change the layout

The **Layout** setting changes the editor chrome on computers.

NOTE

Layout is a computer setting. Phones and tablets always use the touch layout.

1. Open **Settings, General**.
2. Under **Layout**, click **Scientific** or **Educational**.

	Scientific	Educational
Top rows	Three rows with every button	Two compact rows
Tools	Left rail, atom palette and ring bar	One tool column, rings included
Menus	Buttons in view	Less used actions move into the ☰ menu (File) and the ⋮ menu
Language and Windows download	Top right	In the ⋮ menu
Preview the next atom	On by default	Off by default
Default	Yes	No

Scientific suits research work, where you want each tool one click away. Educational suits classrooms and new users, because the screen is calmer. For the Teaching menu and classroom settings, see Educational layout and Teaching menu.

Toolbar icon size

On a computer, **Settings, General, Toolbar icon size** sets the size of the top bar and toolbar icons: Small, Medium, Large or Extra large. Small is the default. Larger icons help on big screens and for people who find small targets hard to hit.

Structure theme

The theme above is the app look. The **structure theme** is how molecules are drawn: **Default** (skeletal) or **Ball and stick**. Set it in **Settings, Style, Structure theme**, or in the Style ribbon. See Style and display and the Themes plugin.

Tips

- Use Light for figures you export for print. Check the export preview before you send a file.
- On a projector, try Ink dark with **Bold atom labels** on in Settings, Style.
- The grid button next to the theme button shows or hides the canvas grid.

Questions and answers

How do I turn on dark mode in MolDraw?

Click the sun button in the top bar to switch to Elegant dark. Click again for Ink dark. You can also pick a theme in Settings, General, Theme.

What is the difference between Scientific and Educational layout?

Scientific shows every button in three rows. Educational shows two compact rows and one tool column, and moves other actions into the menus.

Does the dark theme change my saved drawing?

No. The theme is a view setting. Your structures, colors and saved files stay the same.

Source: <https://www.moldraw.com/docs/settings/themes-and-layouts-light-dark-scientific-and-educational/>