

---

# Setting Up Your Personal Computer for CS 136

Sam McCauley  
Data Structures, Spring 2026

This document describes how to set up your personal computer to allow you to write and run Java code using VSCode.

Bear in mind that this setup is completely *optional*. All assignments can be completed using the lab computers rather than a personal computer.

If you have trouble with the setup, you may ask the instructors if they know how to help. However, bear in mind that the answer may frequently be that the instructors do not know how to fix the trouble you encounter. (And bear in mind additionally that we will have to prioritize help with assignments over help with computer setup.) If you cannot get the setup working on your personal computer, you are encouraged to use the lab machines instead.

## Installing VSCode and Java

The following website contains a single installation package for simultaneously installing VSCode and Java: <https://code.visualstudio.com/docs/languages/java>

Click the link above, and find these two links. Click on one, depending on if you have a Mac or Windows computer:

[Install the Coding Pack for Java - Windows](#)

[Install the Coding Pack for Java - macOS](#)

This will download an installer. Open the downloaded file, follow the instructions, and you should be good to go. Be sure to restart your computer before doing anything further!

On Windows, if you encounter an error during installation, try restarting your computer and attempting to open the installer again.<sup>1</sup> Be sure to only open the installer once—be patient; it may take 10–20 seconds to open.

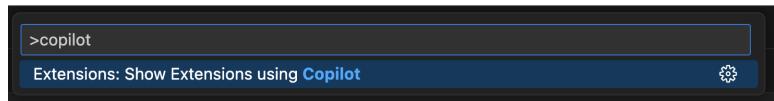
---

<sup>1</sup>When I installed this package on Windows, I had to download, restart, install, then restart again.

## Turning off AI in VSCode

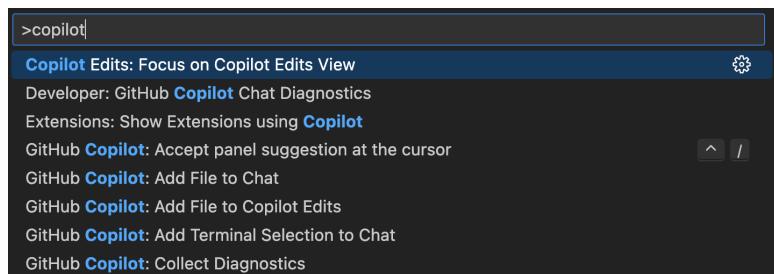
It is possible to set up VSCode to give LLM suggestions as you code. However, LLM usage while coding is not permitted in this course. Let's ensure that your VSCode has these abilities turned off.

VSCode does *not* enable LLM suggestions by default; let's make sure that's the case on your computer. To double-check that CoPilot is not installed, open the Command Palette by pressing Control-Shift-P. A box should pop up at the top of the screen; type `copilot` like so:

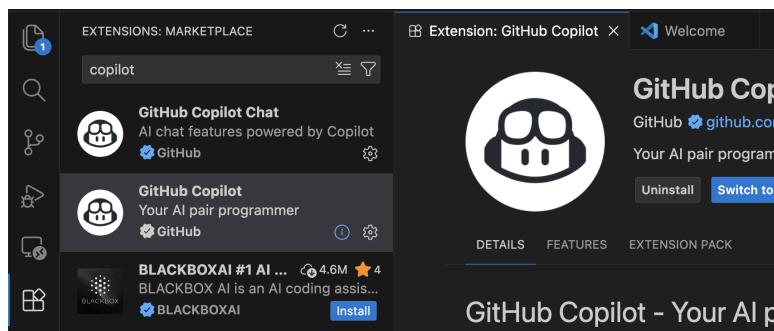


If CoPilot is not installed, the result should look roughly like the above image. You're good to proceed to the next section, "Setting Up Git".

If you *do* find CoPilot installed, you likely saw a list of options like the following:



If so, you should uninstall it. Click on the Extensions icon:  or press Ctrl-Shift-X on Windows, or Command-Shift-X on Mac. Search `copilot` in the search bar, click on `GitHub Copilot`. Then click the Uninstall button. It likely looks something like the following image (you want to click the Uninstall button in this image).



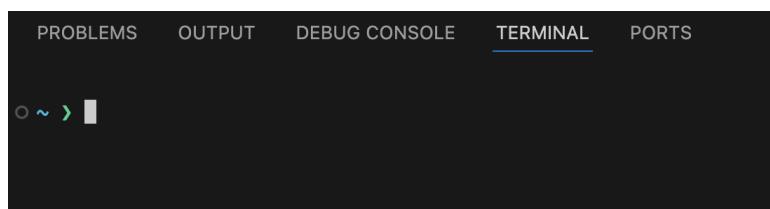
If you have other "copilot" extensions, or any other extensions that use LLMs or AI, they should be disabled. **Please ensure** that you do this, and ask your instructors if you are unsure if a particular extension is allowed.

## Setting Up Git

Git setup differs substantially depending on if you have a Mac or Windows computer.

### Git Installation on Mac

Open up VSCode, and then use Control-` to open the terminal (That is to say: hold the control key, and then hit the key immediately above the Tab key. This is not an apostrophe!) The result should look something like this (your specific computer likely has different text than ~> at the prompt):



Run the following command in your terminal. Copy paste the below text (do NOT copy or type the > at the beginning), and then hit enter.

```
> xcode-select --install
```

### Git Installation on Windows

Click the download link on the git website: <https://git-scm.com/install/>

For the most part, you should select the default option during installation, with one key exception. Make sure the default editor is Visual Studio Code; see the following picture. (The installer usually suggests Vim. While I love Vim, it is probably not the right tool here.)

