

Source — Viewing the source code

[Description](#)
 [Syntax](#)
 [Remarks and examples](#)
 [Also see](#)

Description

Many Mata functions are written in Mata. `viewsource` will allow you to examine their source code.

Syntax

```
viewsource functionname.mata
```

Remarks and examples

[stata.com](#)

Some Mata functions are implemented in C (they are part of Mata itself), and others are written in Mata.

`viewsource` allows you to look at the official source code written in Mata. Reviewing this code is a great way to learn Mata.

The official source code is stored in `.mata` files. To see the source code for `diag()` (see [\[M-5\] `diag\(\)`](#)), for instance, type

```
. viewsource diag.mata
```

You type this at Stata's dot prompt, not at Mata's colon prompt.

If a function is built in, such as `abs()` (see [\[M-5\] `abs\(\)`](#)), here is what will happen when you attempt to view the source code:

```
. viewsource abs.mata
file "abs.mata" not found
r(601);
```

You can verify that `abs()` is built in by using the `mata which` (see [\[M-3\] `mata which`](#)) command:

```
. mata: mata which abs()
abs(): built-in
```

`viewsource` can be also used to look at source code of community-contributed functions if the distribution included the source code (it might not).

Also see

[\[P\] `viewsource`](#) — View source code

[\[M-1\] `Intro`](#) — Introduction and advice

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