

HTML 101:

The Basics

If you're reading this then most likely you want to build a website. To do this you're going to need to know some HTML. If you've never built a website before then like many you probably think it will be difficult to learn html. The truth is, it's really not all that hard. With this guide you could learn enough HTML to begin building your first page in as little as 24 hours.

Getting Started:

Beginning as we must at the beginning this guide assumes you have no previous HTML experience. It does however assume basic computer skills (such as turning it on and opening programs).

What you'll need:

- 1) a computer (like the one you're using now)
- 2) a web browser. I recommend [Mozilla Firefox](#) but there are many others. (also consider having several browsers available to you for testing how they display your page later)
- 3) A basic word processor. "Notepad" and "Wordpad" in windows or "SimpleText" on the mac will all work perfectly.

Also while we're still gearing up to start writing let me clear up a big misconception I've run into many times over the years. You don't need a big expensive program like Dreamweaver to design websites. While these programs can be useful and enhance your productivity once you already know HTML they are actually harmful to learning how to write it properly in the first place because they allow shortcuts. The expensive programs are also unnecessary as HTML can easily be written on any computer with a basic word processor (Which comes free with any operating system).

Ok now that that's all out of the way lets open the word processor. Now that you're staring at a nice fresh blank file I want you to click the file menu at the top left hand corner of the screen and then choose SAVE AS. It should bring up a window with a drop down menu to change the file type you save the file as. Make sure you set this to TEXT Document format.

Now you need to name and save the file. Make sure you remember you'll have to give the file both a name and then a suffix. A suffix is the part that tells the computer what kind of file this is. Your saving procedure will go something like this.

- 1) Click File Menu, then Save as (the save as window should appear)
- 2) Change the File type to "Text Document"
- 3) Name the file "page1"
- 4) Add the Suffix ".html" (your file name should now look like "page1.html")
- 5) Click the save button to save the file to your hard drive

These steps are very important otherwise your document will not be formatted properly and therefore will not display correctly in a browser. Now that we've set the stage let the masterpiece be written.

Tags: (Not just for presents anymore)

With your fresh blank (and properly formatted) document now sitting before you it's time to start typing your first HTML code.

HTML works in a way that should seem very logical to you. It reads top to bottom and left to right just like the text you're used to reading in books, magazines, newspapers, and this very document you are reading now. HTML is just like that text only it's given structure by a series of commands the computer will recognize called tags.

Tags are very simple but give you the power to shape the text in various ways. For example if you want to make some of the text on a page **bold like this**. Then you would place the tag for bold in the exact place you want the bold text to begin, and then another tag to turn off the bold text where you want it to end. Not too hard right?

All tags are set up in the same way. They begin with a less-than symbol: < and end with a greater than symbol >. What's between these two symbols is the tag itself <TAG> there are no exceptions to this rule. Now you may be asking how do I then turn off the tag. To turn off the tag in the proper place you insert a second what we call Closing tag in the exact spot you wish the tag's effect to end. A closing tag is similar to the normal (opening) tag but with a minor difference. The inclusion of a slash / after the less than symbol <. Which would look something like this </TAG>

Lets use the Bold tag example from above to demonstrate.

The tag for bold is "b" (fairly obvious right?) So to bold text in an html document you would do this

```
<b>I'm bold text!</b>
```

Now lets examine what we just did. is the beginning (or opening) tag for bold. is the closing tag for bold. In the middle we have the text "I'm bold text!" and when displayed in a browser it will appear as:

I'm bold text!

Notice the tags are invisible. This is because they are used by the computer and not intended to be seen on the finished page. Also it is important to note that while it is still commonly used the "B" for **bold** and other simple tags (such as "i" for *Italics*) are considered outdated. The current standards make use of a more advanced coding called CSS in order to separate content from presentation. What that means is you set the structure of your document in HTML and then control it's appearance and how it displays using a separate document called a CSS file.

This means we can mark our keywords using **strong** and *em* tags, which have the same effect, but comply with the latest standards.

```
<strong>BOLD</strong> and <em>Italics</em>
```

While it is not required to use CSS or the current standards it is worth noting that in the future and as you progress in skill as a web designer CSS gives much greater flexibility than just plain HTML ever could.

Opening and Closing Tags:

Most tags require an opening and closing tag. Though not every tag does. Also most tags are easy to understand because their function is fairly obvious. For example a few common tags you'll use are

`` or `` Which causes things to become **bold**
`<i>` or `` Which causes things to become *Italicized* or *Emphasized*
`<p>` which sets what is within a paragraph `<p>I'm a paragraph.</p>`

Now you may be asking can i use two or more tags at once?
Of course you can just be sure you follow the correct format.

`Strong and emphasis` gives you ***Bold and Italic***

If you do use multiple tags to alter text, make sure not to get the end tags out of order. example:

`Strong and emphasis`

In terms of format, the example above is not correct. The end tags are out of order in relation to the start tags. Which as you can imagine can cause a lot of problems. To avoid problems try to always set the open and close tags at the same time. Always placing them at the farthest ends of the item being affected.

As I alluded to earlier there are tags that do not require an open and close tag. The most common one you'll use is the line break tag `
`. This **BR**eaks the text and starts it again on the next line. Remember you saved your document as TEXT so where you hit ENTER to jump to the next line was not saved. In HTML you need to denote where you want every carriage return with a `
`.

Writing Your First Page:

Feeling nervous? Well go get yourself a drink of water and relax I promise it's nothing to be nervous about. Besides if you mess up no one but you will ever know.

Ok so first things first. Open and save a nice new fresh document like we learned earlier. Now that you're ready with a fresh document the first thing we'll have to add is a "doctype" like this one

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/loose.dtd">
```

What this does is tell the browser what version of html you are using and what standards to apply to it. Right now it really doesn't make that much of a difference but when you get heavier into CSS it makes significant difference. So it's best to get into the habit now.

Now that you've added that the next thing you're going to need is this tag **<HTML>** you must ALWAYS have this tag as it tells your browser that this is an html document and to display it as such.

Next is the **HEAD** tags. **<HEAD>** and **</HEAD>** The head tags do three important things.

- 1) They contain important information about the document. Such as the title, meta tags which are not visibly displayed in the browser window but still serve a purpose to your page.
- 2) They are loaded first by the browser and whatever is between them is run first
- 3) And they separate the document into two sections the Head and the Body

The next tag you place should always be **<TITLE>** and **</TITLE>** these tags place whatever is between them in the bar at the top of your browser window. The Title Tags **must** be placed within the **<HEAD>** tags. It will look something like this:

```
<HEAD> <TITLE> title of your page </TITLE> </HEAD>
```

After this you will place the **<BODY>** and **</BODY>** tags. Inside of which you will place the content of your page (whatever that may be) and end with **</HTML>** to close the document.

Ok I know that all sounds like a lot of gibberish probably right? Well heres an example for you to follow.

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/loose.dtd">
<html>
  <head>
    <title>HTML IS FUN!</title>
  </head>
  <body>
    <p>Hello <strong>world!</strong></p>
    <br>
    <p>This is my first HTML page and I'm VERY proud of myself YAY!</p>
  </body>
</html>
```

Hopefully that helps make things a little more clear for you. Now what I want you to do is save the document and open it in your browser to see how it looks. Don't worry I'll wait....

Ok you're back. Cool right? Now that you've written your first page in HTML you can take a well deserved break. When you return we'll begin adding more complicated content to the page.

Fun With Text:

So far you've made your first HTML page. With the Skills you've learned doing that you should be well prepared to arrange text on a page. So now we're going to talk about changing text size.

Lets start with Heading tags, which create (I know you can guess this now) HEADINGS! I know it's truly an amazing thing. All sarcasm aside headings are quite useful on pages as they allow you to easily draw attention to important information and more efficiently divide up your content.

There are six heading commands `<H1>` through `<H6>`. `<H1>` is the largest and they get progressively smaller to `<H6>`. Below is an approximation of their relative sizes.

`<H1>I am Heading #1</H1>`

`<H2>I am Heading #2</H2>`

`<H3>I am Heading #3</H3>`

`<H4>I am Heading #4</H4>`

`<H5>I am Heading #5</H5>`

`<H6>I am Heading #6</H6>`

Like the `<p>` tag Headlines are block level elements. Which means it likes to be on a line by itself. If you attempt to place other elements on the same line with it they will be kicked onto a new line.

The other type of element is an *in-line* element. These ones don't create new lines around themselves. If you guessed bold and italic tags fell into this category then you're right and you're catching on to this HTML thing already. In-line elements should always be contained in a Block level element. For example in the first page we built

`<p>Hello world!</p>`

World was within Strong (Bold) tags which were within the Paragraph tag.

Another useful tag is the `style` tag which allows you a lot of control over the final look of your page. This used to be done using the ``, `` and similar tags, but they've now been replaced the following CSS based code.

`<p style="font-size: 150%;">This makes the text 150% it's default size</p>`

The above code changes the size of the text to be 150% of it's normal size. But you can do a lot more with style commands than just changing the font size. You can change colors, borders, and really just

about anything. The code is formatted as follows **Property: value;**

The property could be the font-size, the color, etc. And the value is what you want to change it to. The property is separated from the value by a colon, and a semi-colon is used to show that the property is complete.

In the example above we used a percentage of 150% to define the font size. However you could set the percentage to anything higher or lower than 100% if you wanted to. You aren't limited to percentages either. Pixels, points, named sizes are all possible.

The three properties you're most likely to use however are

- Pixels: set up as **pixels: 14px;** this sets an exact value for the size of the text.
- Colors: set up as **color: red;** this sets the text to the chosen color.
- Text Alignment: set up as **text-align: center;** this sets where the text appears. The example centers the text on the page, but you can also justify it to the right side of the page by using **text-align: right;**. By default your text is justified to the left without any need to use a style attribute or tag.

There are many more properties you could use but you can learn about those as the need arises. For now lets try combining two properties to apply them to the same text. For example lets say we wanted to make some text that was 200% larger and was blue. For this we would use the following code.

```
<p style="font-size: 200%; color: blue;">I'm big and blue Baby!</p>
```

which would appear something like:

I'm big and blue Baby!

You can also combine this with the other tags we learned earlier. Even placing the style attributes within a **** or **** tag (note they will not function within a **** or **<I>** tag) to create text like this:

```
<p style="font-size: 200%; color: blue;">I'm big and blue Baby!<strong style="font-size: 50%; color: red;">But I'm small bold and red</strong></p>
```

which would appear something like:

I'm big and blue Baby! **But I'm small bold and red**

now if we wanted to center it on the page as well we could add **text-align: center;** the full code appearing as:

```
<p style="font-size: 200%; color: blue; text-align: center;">I'm big and blue Baby!<strong style="font-size: 50%; color: red;">But I'm small bold and red</strong></p>
```

Which would appear as:

I'm big and blue Baby! **But I'm small bold and red**

So I think we've covered all the basics of text manipulation. Remember though theres still so much more you can do with HTML and CSS to customize your page. If you really want to do anything beyond these basics you'll have to build upon what you've learned today. Until then the techniques you've learned today should serve you well in building basic pages and it will give you a good solid foundation to build upon. So now on to the next chapter...

Images: now we're getting fancy

Images make your website pretty so I'm sure you'll want to use a lot of them on your finished site. If you've every looked at an image file on your computer you'll notice there are many different kinds of image files each with their own file extension .jpg for example.

For webpages the file types you'll want to use are .jpg (sometimes .jpeg), .gif, and .png. Each type has different properties which make them better or worse suited to particular uses. Lets go over them now.

- **.jpeg or .jpg** (pronounced as “j-peg”) This format has two names because different computer systems may allow 3 or 4 letters in the file extension. JPEG stands for Joint Photographic Experts Group, which is the name of the organization who invented the file format. JPEGs are a very special and unique image type in that it uses compression to save memory when it's being stored but can “re inflate” itself to it's normal size when viewed. So for example a jpeg may be 10kb of data but when it's being stored it may only take up 5kb. Which may not seem like much of a difference but believe me it makes a lot of difference over time. The only problems with JPEG images is that they are incapable of animation or transparency and they tend to take up extra memory for the “re inflation” process when being viewed.
- **.gif** (pronounced either “jiff” or “giff” with a hard g, depending on who you ask) My father always said Jiff and I always said “giff” it's a thing. Anyways the acronym in this case stands for Graphics Interchange Format. Gifs were invented by Compuserve and it's still highly popular because of it's simplify. .gif files are made up of pixels that together form a picture similar to the way your television or computer monitor creates images. They are capable of limited animation and transparency.
- **.png** (pronounces as the word ping or as the letters P N G again depending who you ask) This is considered a replacement for the .gif format as it has partial transparency options but not all browsers support that well.

Now that you know the players lets try inserting one into a page. The basic tag used here is as follows:

```
<IMG SRC="imagename.jpg">
```

Obviously replace **Imagename.jpg** with the name and file type of your image file. That will simply display the image as on the page. There are ways to alter the dimensions of the image and play around with it in other ways but this is the basics. Not hard at all right?

Links: magical paths to other worlds (or not)

Links or Hyperlinks are used to move people around on your own site or to other sites on the web. The basic tag for a hyperlink is this:

```
<A HREF="http://www.awebpage.com">Text</A>
```

on your site “awebpage.com” would be replaced with the actual address of the site you want to link to. “text” would be replaced with whatever you want the link to appear as on your webpage. Anything could be placed here. The name of the website, a description of the site, or even an image could be a link. Which would look something like this:

```
<A HREF="http://www.awebpage.com"> </A>
```

As I said earlier Links can be used for a multitude of things. One of the most common uses is for navigation links within your own site. For example having a link from your homepage link to your art gallery page which could look something like:

```
<A HREF="http://www.yourpage.com/gallery.html">My Art Gallery</A>
```

These kind of links are useful for building a navigation bar on your website.

Another kind of useful link for your website is a mailto command. Which allows other people to click it and send you an e-mail. This would look something like:

```
<A HREF="mailto:me@mywebsite.com">Mail Me Here</A>
```

This is a great way to let people contact you about your site **However**, please be very careful when using this, for two reasons:

1. If the person only has a web based email account, (like Yahoo or Gmail) and hasn't configured an email program on their computer then it will open their email program for the first time and try to walk them through setting it up. Which is useless and probably irritating to users who don't know what it is.
2. Perhaps the biggest reason to be careful however is that there are now little programs called 'bots' which wander round the Internet looking for email addresses to send spam to. If you don't want to receive a big pile of spam every day, then think very hard before publishing your email address anywhere on the net.

Final Thoughts:

Now that you've learned the basics you should try putting it all together and see what you come up with. A good example would be something like:

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN"
    "http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/loose.dtd">
<html>
  <head>
    <title>HTML IS FUN!</title>
  </head>
  <body>
    <h1>Stuff I made</h1>
    <p>Hello <strong>world!</strong></p>
    <br>
    <p>This is better than my first HTML page and I'm VERY proud of myself YAY!</p>
    <br>
    <A HREF="mailto:me@mywebsite.com">Email me</A>
    <br>
    <p style="font-size: 200%; color: blue;">I'm big and blue Baby!<strong style="font-size: 30%;
color: red;">But I'm small bold and red</strong></p>
    <br>
    <h3>Links</h3>
    <a href="http://www.millionairegeeks.com">These Guys Taught me this they <b>RULE</b></a>
    <br>
  </body>
</html>
```

Beyond that there is still much you can learn about html this was just the beginning. There's a whole new world out there of HTML, XHTML, and CSS for you to learn. All of which will allow you much greater control over the look and feel of your page. In the near future we will be offering our own line of Ebooks on these and many other subjects in our [Millionaire Geeks Bookshelf](#).

For more information on HTML and Web design please visit our [Free article database](#) and consider signing up for our [Free monthly Newsletter](#) filled with tips tricks and geeky news not available anywhere else.

Until then enjoy your days and don't spend them all in front of the monitor.

Your friend,

The Amazing Mr. J