Introduction to HTML

What is an HTML File?

- HTML stands for **H**yper **T**ext **M**arkup **L**anguage
- An HTML file is a text file containing small **markup tags**
- The markup tags tell the Web browser **how to display** the page
- An HTML file must have an **htm** or **html** file extension
- An HTML file can be created using a **simple text editor**

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Title of page</title>
</head>
<body>
This is my first homepage. <b>This text is bold</b>
</body>
</html>
```

Save the file as "mypage.htm".

Example Explained

The first tag in your HTML document is <html>. This tag tells your browser that this is the start of an HTML document. The last tag in your document is </html>. This tag tells your browser that this is the end of the HTML document.

The text between the <head> tag and the </head> tag is header information. Header information is not displayed in the browser window.

The text between the <title> tags is the title of your document. The title is displayed in your browser's caption.

The text between the <body> tags is the text that will be displayed in your browser.

The text between the and tags will be displayed in a bold font.

HTM or HTML Extension?

When you save an HTML file, you can use either the .htm or the .html extension. We have used .htm in our examples. It might be a bad habit inherited from the past when some of the commonly used software only allowed three letter extensions.

With newer software we think it will be perfectly safe to use .html.

Note on HTML Editors:

You can easily edit HTML files using a WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) editor like FrontPage or Dreamweaver, instead of writing your markup tags in a plain text file.

However, if you want to be a skillful Web developer, we strongly recommend that you use a plain text editor to learn your primer HTML.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: After I have edited an HTML file, I cannot view the result in my browser. Why?

A: Make sure that you have saved the file with a proper name and extension like "c:\mypage.htm". Also make sure that you use the same name when you open the file in your browser.

Q: I have edited an HTML file, but the changes don't show in the browser. Why?

A: A browser caches pages so it doesn't have to read the same page twice. When you have modified a page, the browser doesn't know that. Use the browser's refresh/reload button to force the browser to reload the page.

Q: What browser should I use?

A: You can do all the training with all of the well-known browsers, like Internet Explorer, Firefox, Netscape, or Opera. However, some of the examples in our advanced classes require the latest versions of the browsers.

Q: Does my computer have to run Windows? What about a Mac?

A: You can do all your training on a non-Windows computer like a Mac.

HTML Elements

HTML documents are text files made up of HTML elements.

HTML elements are defined using HTML tags.

HTML Tags

- HTML tags are used to mark-up HTML **elements**
- HTML tags are surrounded by the **two characters < and >**
- The surrounding characters are called **angle brackets**
- HTML tags normally **come in pairs** like and
- The first tag in a pair is the **start tag,** the second tag is the **end tag**
- The text between the start and end tags is the **element content**
- HTML tags are **not case sensitive,** means the same as <B>

HTML Elements

Remember the HTML example from the previous page:

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Title of page</title>
</head>
<body>
This is my first homepage. <b>This text is bold</b>
</body>
</html>
```

This is an HTML element:

```
<b>This text is bold</b>
```

The HTML element starts with a **start tag**:
The **content** of the HTML element is: This text is bold
The HTML element ends with an **end tag**:

The purpose of the tag is to define an HTML element that should be displayed as bold.

This is also an HTML element:

```
<body>
This is my first homepage. <b>This text is bold</b>
</body>
```

This HTML element starts with the start tag <body>, and ends with the end tag </body>.

The purpose of the <body> tag is to define the HTML element that contains the body of the HTML document.

Why do We Use Lowercase Tags?

We have just said that HTML tags are not case sensitive: <B> means the same as . If you surf the Web, you will notice that plenty of web sites use uppercase HTML tags in their source code. We always use lowercase tags. Why?

If you want to follow the latest web standards, you should always use lowercase tags. The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) recommends lowercase tags in their HTML 4 recommendation, and XHTML (the next generation HTML) demands lowercase tags.

Basic HTML Tags

Headings

Headings are defined with the <h1> to <h6> tags. <h1> defines the largest heading. <h6> defines the smallest heading.

```
<h1>This is a heading</h1>
<h2>This is a heading</h2>
<h3>This is a heading</h3>
<h4>This is a heading</h4>
<h5>This is a heading</h5>
<h6>This is a heading</h6>
```

HTML automatically adds an extra blank line before and after a heading.

Paragraphs

Paragraphs are defined with the tag.

```
<p>This is a paragraph</p>
<p>This is another paragraph</p>
```

HTML automatically adds an extra blank line before and after a paragraph.

Don't Forget the Closing Tag

You might have noticed that paragraphs can be written without end tags :

```
<p>This is a paragraph
<p>This is another paragraph
```

The example above will work in most browsers, but don't rely on it. Future version of HTML will not allow you to skip ANY end tags.

Closing all HTML elements with an end tag is a future-proof way of writing HTML. It also makes the code easier to understand (read and browse) when you mark both where an element starts and where it ends.

Line Breaks

The
 tag is used when you want to break a line, but don't want to start a new paragraph. The
 tag forces a line break wherever you place it.

```
<p>This <br> is a para<br>graph with line
breaks</p>
```

The
 tag is an empty tag. It has no end tag like </br>, since a closing tag doesn't make any sense.

 or

More and more often you will see the
 tag written like this:

Because the
 tag has no end tag (or closing tag), it breaks one of the rules for future HTML (the XML based XHTML), namely that all elements must be closed.

Writing it like
 is a future proof way of closing (or ending) the tag inside the opening tag, accepted by both HTML and XML.

Comments in HTML

The comment tag is used to insert a comment in the HTML source code. A comment will be ignored by the browser. You can use comments to explain your code, which can help you when you edit the source code at a later date.

```
<!-- This is a comment -->
```

Note that you need an exclamation point after the opening bracket, but not before the closing bracket.

Basic HTML Tags

If you lookup the basic HTML tags in the reference below, you will see that the reference contains additional information about tag attributes.

You will learn more about HTML tag attributes in the next chapter of this tutorial.

Tag	Description
<html>	Defines an HTML document
<body>	Defines the document's body
<h1> to <h6>	Defines header 1 to header 6
<p>	Defines a paragraph
 	Inserts a single line break
<hr>	Defines a horizontal rule
<!-->	Defines a comment

HTML Attributes

Attributes provide additional information to an HTML element.

HTML Tag Attributes

HTML tags can have attributes. Attributes provide additional information to an HTML element.

Attributes always come in name/value pairs like this: name="value".

Attributes are always specified in the start tag of an HTML element.

Attributes Example 1:

<h1> defines the start of a heading.

<h1 align="center"> has additional information about the alignment.

Attributes Example 2:

<body> defines the body of an HTML document.

<body bgcolor="yellow"> has additional information about the background color.

Attributes Example 3:

<table> defines an HTML table. (You will learn more about HTML tables later)

<table border="1"> has additional information about the border around the table.

Use Lowercase Attributes

Attributes and attribute values are case-insensitive. However, the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) recommends lowercase attributes/attribute values in their HTML 4 recommendation, and XHTML demands lowercase attributes/attribute values.

Always Quote Attribute Values

Attribute values should always be enclosed in quotes. Double style quotes are the most common, but single style quotes are also allowed.

In some rare situations, like when the attribute value itself contains quotes, it is necessary to use single quotes:

name='John "ShotGun" Nelson'

HTML Text Formatting

HTML defines a lot of elements for formatting output, like bold or italic text.

How to View HTML Source

Have you ever seen a Web page and wondered "Hey! How did they do that?"

To find out, click the VIEW option in your browser's toolbar and select SOURCE or PAGE SOURCE. This will open a window that shows you the HTML code of the page.

Text Formatting Tags

Tag	Description
<b>	Defines bold text
<big>	Defines big text
	Defines emphasized text
<i>	Defines italic text
<small>	Defines small text
	Defines strong text
<sub>	Defines subscripted text
<sup>	Defines superscripted text
<ins>	Defines inserted text
<del>	Defines deleted text

Non-breaking Space

The most common character entity in HTML is the non-breaking space.

Normally HTML will truncate spaces in your text. If you write 10 spaces in your text HTML will remove 9 of them. To add spaces to your text, use the   character entity.

The Most Common Character Entities:

Result	Description	Entity Name	Entity Number
	non-breaking space		
<	less than	<	<
>	greater than	>	>
&	ampersand	&	&
"	quotation mark	"	"
'	apostrophe	' (does not	'

		work in IE)	

HTML Links

HTML uses a hyperlink to link to another document on the Web.

The Anchor Tag and the Href Attribute

HTML uses the <a> (anchor) tag to create a link to another document.

An anchor can point to any resource on the Web: an HTML page, an image, a sound file, a movie, etc.

The syntax of creating an anchor:

```
<a href="url">Text to be displayed</a>
```

The <a> tag is used to create an anchor to link from, the href attribute is used to address the document to link to, and the words between the open and close of the anchor tag will be displayed as a hyperlink.

This anchor defines a link to W3Schools:

```
<a href="http://www.w3schools.com/">Visit
W3Schools!</a>
```

The line above will look like this in a browser:

Visit W3Schools!

The Target Attribute

With the target attribute, you can define **where** the linked document will be opened.

The line below will open the document in a new browser window:

```
<a href="http://www.w3schools.com/"
target="_blank">Visit W3Schools!</a>
```

The Anchor Tag and the Name Attribute

The name attribute is used to create a named anchor. When using named anchors we can create links that can jump directly into a specific section on a page, instead of letting the user scroll around to find what he/she is looking for.

Below is the syntax of a named anchor:

```
<a name="label">Text to be displayed</a>
```

The name attribute is used to create a named anchor. The name of the anchor can be any text you care to use.

The line below defines a named anchor:

```
<a name="tips">Useful Tips Section</a>
```

You should notice that a named anchor is not displayed in a special way.

To link directly to the "tips" section, add a # sign and the name of the anchor to the end of a URL, like this:

```
<a
href="http://www.w3schools.com/html_links.asp#tips">
Jump to the Useful Tips Section</a>
```

Link Tags

Tag	Description
<a>	Defines an anchor

HTML Frames

With frames, you can display more than one Web page in the same browser window.

Frames

With frames, you can display more than one HTML document in the same browser window. Each HTML document is called a frame, and each frame is independent of the others.

The disadvantages of using frames are:

- The web developer must keep track of more HTML documents
- It is difficult to print the entire page

The Frameset Tag

- The <frameset> tag defines how to divide the window into frames
- Each frameset defines a set of rows **or** columns
- The values of the rows/columns indicate the amount of screen area each row/column will occupy

---

The Frame Tag

- The <frame> tag defines what HTML document to put into each frame

The HTML document "frame_a.htm" is put into the first column, and the HTML document "frame_b.htm" is put into the second column:

```
<frameset cols="25%,75%">
   <frame src="frame_a.htm">
   <frame src="frame_b.htm">
</frameset>
```

HTML Tables

With HTML you can create tables.

Tables

Tables are defined with the <table> tag. A table is divided into rows (with the <tr> tag), and each row is divided into data cells (with the <td> tag). The letters td stands for "table data," which is the content of a data cell. A data cell can contain text, images, lists, paragraphs, forms, horizontal rules, tables, etc.

```
<table border="1">
<tr>
<td>row 1, cell 1</td>
<td>row 1, cell 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>row 2, cell 1</td>
<td>row 2, cell 2</td>
</tr>
</table>
```

How it looks in a browser:

row 1, cell 1	row 1, cell 2
row 2, cell 1	row 2, cell 2

Tables and the Border Attribute

If you do not specify a border attribute the table will be displayed without any borders. Sometimes this can be useful, but most of the time, you want the borders to show.

To display a table with borders, you will have to use the border attribute:

```
<table border="1">
<tr>
<td>Row 1, cell 1</td>
<td>Row 1, cell 2</td>
</tr>
</table>
```

Headings in a Table

Headings in a table are defined with the <th> tag.

```
<table border="1">
<tr>
<th>Heading</th>
<th>Another Heading</th>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>row 1, cell 1</td>
<td>row 1, cell 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>row 2, cell 1</td>
<td>row 2, cell 2</td>
</tr>
</table>
```

How it looks in a browser:

Heading	Another Heading
row 1, cell 1	row 1, cell 2
row 2, cell 1	row 2, cell 2

Empty Cells in a Table

Table cells with no content are not displayed very well in most browsers.

```
<table border="1">
<tr>
<td>row 1, cell 1</td>
<td>row 1, cell 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>row 2, cell 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</table>
```

How it looks in a browser:

row 1, cell 1	row 1, cell 2
row 2, cell 1	

Note that the borders around the empty table cell are missing (NB! Mozilla Firefox displays the border).

To avoid this, add a non-breaking space ( ) to empty data cells, to make the borders visible:

```
<table border="1">
<tr>
<td>row 1, cell 1</td>
<td>row 1, cell 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>row 2, cell 1</td>
<td> </td>
</tr>
</table>
```

How it looks in a browser:

row 1, cell 1	row 1, cell 2
row 2, cell 1	

Table Tags

Tag	Description

<table>	Defines a table
<th>	Defines a table header
<tr>	Defines a table row
<td>	Defines a table cell
<caption>	Defines a table caption
<colgroup>	Defines groups of table columns
<col>	Defines the attribute values for one or more columns in a table
<thead>	Defines a table head
<tbody>	Defines a table body
<tfoot>	Defines a table footer

HTML Lists

HTML supports ordered, unordered and definition lists.

Unordered Lists

An unordered list is a list of items. The list items are marked with bullets (typically small black circles).

An unordered list starts with the <ul> tag. Each list item starts with the <li> tag.

```
<ul>
<li>Coffee</li>
<li>Milk</li>
</ul>
```

Here is how it looks in a browser:

- Coffee
- Milk

Inside a list item you can put paragraphs, line breaks, images, links, other lists, etc.

Ordered Lists

An ordered list is also a list of items. The list items are marked with numbers.

An ordered list starts with the <ol> tag. Each list item starts with the <li> tag.

```
<ol>
<li>Coffee</li>
<li>Milk</li>
</ol>
```

Here is how it looks in a browser:

1. Coffee
2. Milk

Inside a list item you can put paragraphs, line breaks, images, links, other lists, etc.

Definition Lists

A definition list is **not** a list of items. This is a list of terms and explanation of the terms.

A definition list starts with the <dl> tag. Each definition-list term starts with the <dt> tag. Each definition-list definition starts with the <dd> tag.

```
<dl>
<dt>Coffee</dt>
<dd>Black hot drink</dd>
<dt>Milk</dt>
<dd>White cold drink</dd>
</dl>
```

Here is how it looks in a browser:

Coffee
: Black hot drink

Milk
: White cold drink

Inside a definition-list definition (the <dd> tag) you can put paragraphs, line breaks, images, links, other lists, etc.

List Tags

Tag	Description

	Defines an ordered list
	Defines an unordered list
	Defines a list item
<dl>	Defines a definition list
<dt>	Defines a definition term
<dd>	Defines a definition description

HTML Forms and Input

HTML Forms are used to select different kinds of user input.

Forms

A form is an area that can contain form elements.

Form elements are elements that allow the user to enter information (like text fields, textarea fields, drop-down menus, radio buttons, checkboxes, etc.) in a form.

A form is defined with the <form> tag.

```
<form>
  <input>
  <input>
</form>
```

Input

The most used form tag is the <input> tag. The type of input is specified with the type attribute. The most commonly used input types are explained below.

Text Fields

Text fields are used when you want the user to type letters, numbers, etc. in a form.

```
<form>
First name:
<input type="text" name="firstname">
<br>
Last name:
<input type="text" name="lastname">
</form>
```

How it looks in a browser:

First name:
Last name:

Radio Buttons

Radio Buttons are used when you want the user to select one of a limited number of choices.

```
<form>
<input type="radio" name="sex" value="male"> Male
<br>
<input type="radio" name="sex" value="female">
Female
</form>
```

How it looks in a browser:

- Male
- Female

Note that only one option can be chosen.

Checkboxes

Checkboxes are used when you want the user to select one or more options of a limited number of choices.

```
<form>
I have a bike:
<input type="checkbox" name="vehicle" value="Bike">
<br>
I have a car:
<input type="checkbox" name="vehicle" value="Car">
<br>
```

```
I have an airplane:
<input type="checkbox" name="vehicle"
value="Airplane">
</form>
```

How it looks in a browser:

I have a bike:
I have a car:
I have an airplane:

The Form's Action Attribute and the Submit Button

When the user clicks on the "Submit" button, the content of the form is sent to another file. The form's action attribute defines the name of the file to send the content to. The file defined in the action attribute usually does something with the received input.

```
<form name="input" action="html_form_action.asp"
method="get">
Username:
<input type="text" name="user">
<input type="submit" value="Submit">
</form>
```

How it looks in a browser:

Username: Submit

If you type some characters in the text field above, and click the "Submit" button, you will send your input to a page called "html_form_action.asp". That page will show you the received input.

Form Tags

Tag	Description
<form>	Defines a form for user input
<input>	Defines an input field
<textarea>	Defines a text-area (a multi-line text input

	control)
<label>	Defines a label to a control
<fieldset>	Defines a fieldset
<legend>	Defines a caption for a fieldset
<select>	Defines a selectable list (a drop-down box)
<optgroup>	Defines an option group
<option>	Defines an option in the drop-down box
<button>	Defines a push button

HTML Images

With HTML you can display images in a document.

The Image Tag and the Src Attribute

In HTML, images are defined with the <img> tag.

The <img> tag is empty, which means that it contains attributes only and it has no closing tag.

To display an image on a page, you need to use the src attribute. Src stands for "source". The value of the src attribute is the URL of the image you want to display on your page.

The syntax of defining an image:

```
<img src="url">
```

The URL points to the location where the image is stored. An image named "boat.gif" located in the directory "images" on "www.w3schools.com" has the URL: http://www.w3schools.com/images/boat.gif.

The Alt Attribute

The alt attribute is used to define an "alternate text" for an image. The value of the alt attribute is an author-defined text:

```
<img src="boat.gif" alt="Big Boat">
```

The "alt" attribute tells the reader what he or she is missing on a page if the browser can't load images. The browser will then display the alternate text instead of the image. It is a good practice to include the "alt" attribute for each image on a page, to improve the display and usefulness of your document for people who have text-only browsers.

HTML Backgrounds

A good background can make a Web site look really great.

Backgrounds

The <body> tag has two attributes where you can specify backgrounds. The background can be a color or an image.

Bgcolor

The bgcolor attribute specifies a background-color for an HTML page. The value of this attribute can be a hexadecimal number, an RGB value, or a color name:

```
<body bgcolor="#000000">
<body bgcolor="rgb(0,0,0)">
<body bgcolor="black">
```

The lines above all set the background-color to black.

Background

The background attribute specifies a background-image for an HTML page. The value of this attribute is the URL of the image you want to use. If the image is smaller than the browser window, the image will repeat itself until it fills the entire browser window.

```
<body background="clouds.gif">
```

```
<body
background="http://www.w3schools.com/clouds.gif">
```

The URL can be relative (as in the first line above) or absolute (as in the second line above).

Note: If you want to use a background image, you should keep in mind:

- Will the background image increase the loading time too much?
- Will the background image look good with other images on the page?

HTML Colors

Colors are displayed combining RED, GREEN, and BLUE light sources.

Color Values

HTML colors can be defined as a hexadecimal notation for the combination of Red, Green, and Blue color values (RGB).

The lowest value that can be given to one light source is 0 (hex #00) and the highest value is 255 (hex #FF).

The table below shows the result of combining Red, Green, and Blue light sources:.

Color	Color HEX	Color RGB
	#000000	rgb(0,0,0)
	#FF0000	rgb(255,0,0)
	#00FF00	rgb(0,255,0)
	#0000FF	rgb(0,0,255)
	#FFFF00	rgb(255,255,0)
	#00FFFF	rgb(0,255,255)
	#FF00FF	rgb(255,0,255)
	#C0C0C0	rgb(192,192,192)
	#FFFFFF	rgb(255,255,255)

W3C Standard Color Names

W3C has listed 16 color names that will validate with an HTML validator.

The color names are: aqua, black, blue, fuchsia, gray, green, lime, maroon, navy, olive, purple, red, silver, teal, white, and yellow.

Cross-browser Color Names

A collection of nearly 150 color names are supported by all major browsers.

HTML Basic Document

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Document name goes here</title>
</head>

<body>
Visible text goes here
</body>

</html>
```

Heading Elements

```
<h1>Largest Heading</h1>

<h2> . . . </h2>
<h3> . . . </h3>
<h4> . . . </h4>
<h5> . . . </h5>

<h6>Smallest Heading</h6>
```

Text Elements

```
<p>This is a paragraph</p>
<br> (line break)
<hr> (horizontal rule)
<pre>This text is preformatted</pre>
```

Logical Styles

```
<em>This text is emphasized</em>
<strong>This text is strong</strong>
<code>This is some computer code</code>
```

Physical Styles

```
<b>This text is bold</b>
<i>This text is italic</i>
```

Links, Anchors, and Image Elements

```
<a href="http://www.example.com/">This is a Link</a>
<a href="http://www.example.com/"><img src="URL"
alt="Alternate Text"></a>
<a href="mailto:webmaster@example.com">Send e-
mail</a>

A named anchor:
<a name="tips">Useful Tips Section</a>
<a href="#tips">Jump to the Useful Tips Section</a>
```

Unordered list

```
<ul>
<li>First item</li>
<li>Next item</li>
</ul>
```

Ordered list

```
<ol>
<li>First item</li>
<li>Next item</li>
</ol>
```

Definition list

```
<dl>
<dt>First term</dt>
<dd>Definition</dd>
<dt>Next term</dt>
<dd>Definition</dd>
</dl>
```

Tables

```
<table border="1">
<tr>
<th>someheader</th>
<th>someheader</th>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sometext</td>
<td>sometext</td>
</tr>
</table>
```

Frames

```
<frameset cols="25%,75%">
  <frame src="page1.htm">
  <frame src="page2.htm">
</frameset>
```

Forms

```
<form action="http://www.example.com/test.asp"
method="post/get">

<input type="text" name="lastname" value="Nixon"
size="30" maxlength="50">
<input type="password">
<input type="checkbox" checked="checked">
<input type="radio" checked="checked">
<input type="submit">
<input type="reset">
<input type="hidden">
<select>
<option>Apples
<option selected>Bananas
<option>Cherries
</select>
<textarea name="Comment" rows="60"
cols="20"></textarea>
</form>
```

Entities

< is the same as <
> is the same as >
© is the same as ©

Other Elements

<!-- This is a comment -->

<blockquote>
Text quoted from some source.
</blockquote><address>
Address 1
Address 2
City
</address>

HTML Meta

The Meta Element

HTML also includes a meta element that goes inside the head element. The purpose of the meta element is to provide meta-information about the document.

Most often the meta element is used to provide information that is relevant to browsers or search engines like describing the content of your document.

Note: W3C states that "*Some user agents support the use of META to refresh the current page after a specified number of seconds, with the option of replacing it by a different URI. Authors should not use this technique to forward users to different pages, as this makes the page inaccessible to some users. Instead, automatic page forwarding should be done using server-side redirects*" at http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/struct/global.html#adef-http-equiv.

Keywords for Search Engines

Some search engines on the WWW will use the name and content attributes of the meta tag to index your pages.

This meta element defines a description of your page:

<meta name="description" content="Free Web tutorials on HTML, CSS, XML, and XHTML">

This meta element defines keywords for your page:

<meta name="keywords" content="HTML, DHTML, CSS, XML, XHTML, JavaScript, VBScript">

The intention of the name and content attributes is to describe the content of a page.

HTML QUIZ

1. What does HTML stand for?

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2. Who is making the Web standards?

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3. Choose the correct HTML tag for the largest heading

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4. What is the correct HTML tag for inserting a line break?

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5. What is the correct HTML for adding a background color?

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6. Choose the correct HTML tag to make a text bold

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7. Choose the correct HTML tag to make a text italic

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8. What is the correct HTML for making a hyperlink?

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9. How can you make an e-mail link?

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10. How can you open a link in a new browser window?

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11. Which of these tags are all <table> tags?

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12. Choose the correct HTML to left-align the content inside a tablecell

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13. How can you make a list that lists the items with numbers?

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14. How can you make a list that lists the items with bullets?

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15. What is the correct HTML for making a checkbox?

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16. What is the correct HTML for making a text input field?

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17. What is the correct HTML for making a drop-down list?

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18. What is the correct HTML for making a text area?

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19. What is the correct HTML for inserting an image?

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20. What is the correct HTML for inserting a background image?