The **PHP Hypertext Preprocessor (PHP)** is a programming language that allows web developers to create dynamic content that interacts with databases. PHP is basically used for developing web based software applications. This tutorial helps you to build your base with PHP.

Characteristics of PHP

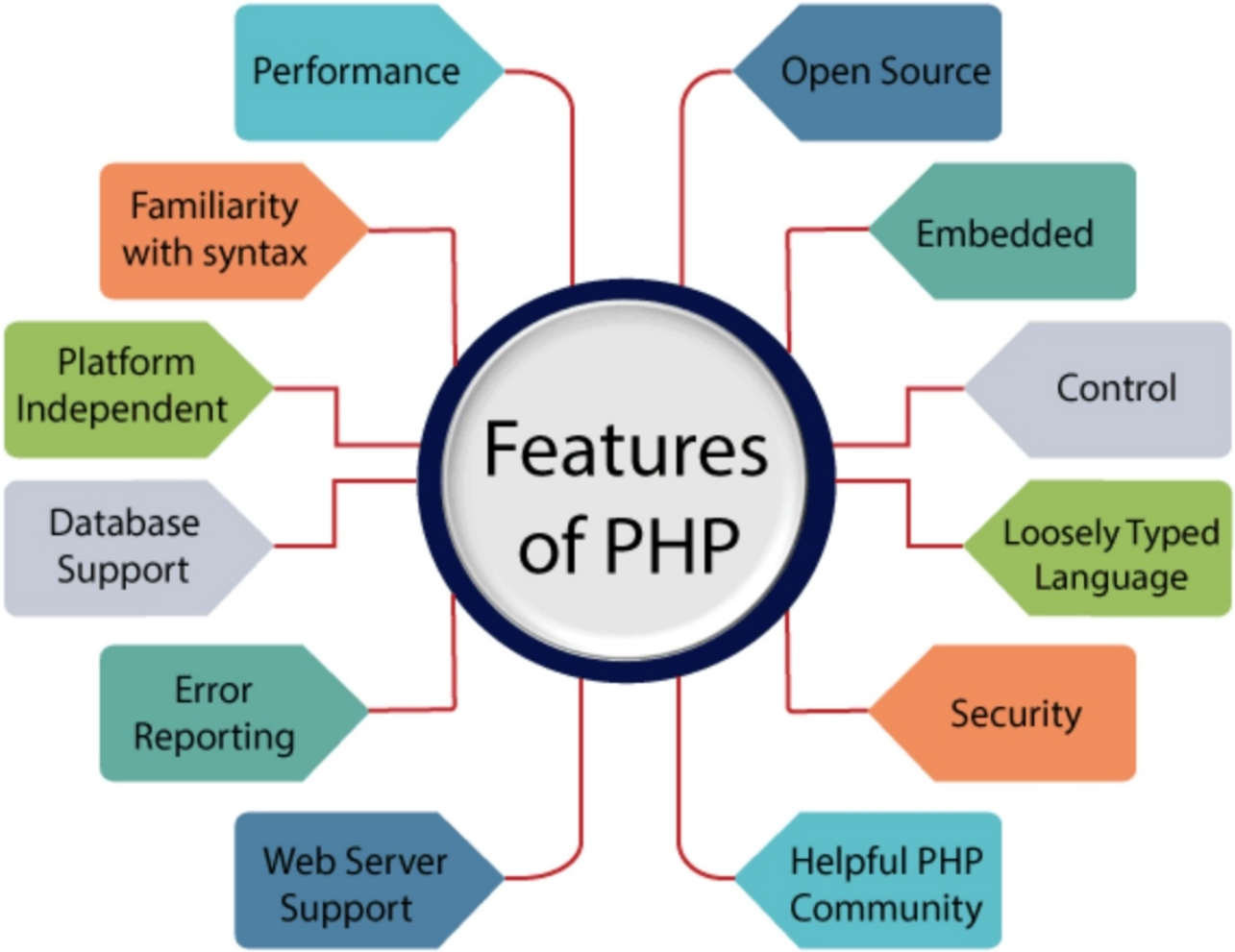
Five important characteristics make PHP's practical nature possible −

- Simplicity
- Efficiency
- Security
- Flexibility
- Familiarity

Applications of PHP

As mentioned before, PHP is one of the most widely used language over the web. I'm going to list few of them here:

- PHP performs system functions, i.e. from files on a system it can create, open, read, write, and close them.
- PHP can handle forms, i.e. gather data from files, save data to a file, through email you can send data, return data to the user.
- You add, delete, modify elements within your database through PHP.
- Access cookies variables and set cookies.
- Using PHP, you can restrict users to access some pages of your website.
- It can encrypt data.


Features of PHP
Performance
Familiarity with syntax
Platform Independent
Database Support
Error Reporting
Web Server Support
Open Source
Embedded
Control
Loosely Typed Language
Security
Helpful PHP Community

PHP script is executed much faster than those scripts which are written in other languages such as JSP and ASP. PHP uses its own memory, so the server workload and loading time is automatically reduced, which results in faster processing speed and better performance.

Open Source:

PHP source code and software are freely available on the web. You can develop all the versions of PHP according to your requirement without paying any cost. All its components are free to download and use.

Familiarity with syntax:

PHP has easily understandable syntax. Programmers are comfortable coding with it.

Embedded:

PHP code can be easily embedded within HTML tags and script.

Platform Independent:

PHP is available for WINDOWS, MAC, LINUX & UNIX operating system. A PHP application developed in one OS can be easily executed in other OS also.

Error Reporting -

PHP has predefined error reporting constants to generate an error notice or warning at runtime. E.g., E_ERROR, E_WARNING, E_STRICT, E_PARSE.

Loosely Typed Language:

PHP allows us to use a variable without declaring its datatype. It will be taken automatically at the time of execution based on the type of data it contains on its value.

Web servers Support:

PHP is compatible with almost all local servers used today like Apache, Netscape, Microsoft IIS, etc.

Security:

PHP is a secure language to develop the website. It consists of multiple layers of security to prevent threads and malicious attacks.

PHP Echo

PHP echo is a language construct, not a function. Therefore, you don't need to use parenthesis with it. But if you want to use more than one parameter, it is required to use parenthesis.

The syntax of PHP echo is given below:

```
void echo ( string $arg1 [, string $... ] )
```

PHP echo statement can be used to print the string, multi-line strings, escaping characters, variable, array, etc. Some important points that you must know about the echo statement are:

- echo is a statement, which is used to display the output.
- echo can be used with or without parentheses: echo(), and echo.
- echo does not return any value.
- We can pass multiple strings separated by a comma (,) in echo.

PHP Variables

In PHP, a variable is declared using a **$ sign** followed by the variable name. Here, some important points to know about variables:

- As PHP is a loosely typed language, so we do not need to declare the data types of the variables. It automatically analyzes the values and makes conversions to its correct datatype.
- After declaring a variable, it can be reused throughout the code.
- Assignment Operator (=) is used to assign the value to a variable.

Syntax of declaring a variable in PHP is given below:

```
$variablename=value;
```

Rules for declaring PHP variable:

- A variable must start with a dollar ($) sign, followed by the variable name.
- It can only contain alpha-numeric character and underscore (A-z, 0-9, _).
- A variable name must start with a letter or underscore (_) character.
- A PHP variable name cannot contain spaces.
- One thing to be kept in mind that the variable name cannot start with a number or special symbols.
- PHP variables are case-sensitive, so $name and $NAME both are treated as different variable.

```php
<?php
$str="hello string";
$x=200;
$y=44.6;
echo "string is: $str <br/>";
echo "integer is: $x <br/>";
echo "float is: $y <br/>";
?>
```

Output:

```
string is: hello string
integer is: 200
float is: 44.6
```

```php
<?php
$x=5;
$y=6;
$z=$x+$y;
echo $z;
?>
```

Output:

```
11
```

PHP Variable Scope

The scope of a variable is defined as its range in the program under which it can be accessed. In other words, "The scope of a variable is the portion of the program within which it is defined and can be accessed."

PHP has three types of variable scopes:

1. Local variable
2. Global variable
3. Static variable

Local variable

The variables that are declared within a function are called local variables for that function. These local variables have their scope only in that particular function in which they are declared. This means that these variables cannot be accessed outside the function, as they have local scope.

A variable declaration outside the function with the same name is completely different from the variable declared inside the function. Let's understand the local variables with the help of an example:

```php
<?php
   function local_var()
   {
      $num = 45;  //local variable
      echo "Local variable declared inside the function is: ". $
   }
   local_var();
?>
```

Output:

```
Local variable declared inside the function is: 45
```

Static variable

It is a feature of PHP to delete the variable, once it completes its execution and memory is freed. Sometimes we need to store a variable even after completion of function execution. Therefore, another important feature of variable scoping is static variable. We use the static keyword before the variable to define a variable, and this variable is called as **static variable**.

Static variables exist only in a local function, but it does not free its memory after the program execution leaves the scope. Understand it with the help of an example:

```php
<?php
   function static_var()
   {
      static $num1 = 3;      //static variable
      $num2 = 6;         //Non-static variable
      //increment in non-static variable
      $num1++;
      //increment in static variable
      $num2++;
      echo "Static: " .$num1 ."</br>";
      echo "Non-static: " .$num2 ."</br>";
   }

//first function call
   static_var();

   //second function call
   static_var();
?>
```

Output:

```
Static: 4
Non-static: 7
Static: 5
Non-static: 7
```

A constant is a name or an identifier for a simple value. A constant value cannot change during the execution of the script. By default, a constant is case-sensitive. By convention, constant identifiers are always uppercase. A constant name starts with a letter or underscore, followed by any number of letters, numbers, or underscores. If you have defined a constant, it can never be changed or undefined.

To define a constant you have to use define() function and to retrieve the value of a constant, you have to simply specifying its name. Unlike with variables, you do not need to have a constant with a $. You can also use the function constant() to read a constant's value if you wish to obtain the constant's name dynamically.

constant() function

As indicated by the name, this function will return the value of the constant.

This is useful when you want to retrieve value of a constant, but you do not know its name, i.e. It is stored in a variable or returned by a function.

constant() example

```
<?php
   define("MINSIZE", 50);

   echo MINSIZE;
   echo constant("MINSIZE"); // same thing as the previous l
?>
```

Only scalar data (boolean, integer, float and string) can be contained in constants.

Differences between constants and variables are

- There is no need to write a dollar sign ($) before a constant, where as in Variable one has to write a dollar sign.
- Constants cannot be defined by simple assignment, they may only be defined using the define() function.
- Constants may be defined and accessed anywhere without regard to variable scoping rules.

PHP Operators

PHP Operator is a symbol i.e used to perform operations on operands. In simple words, operators are used to perform operations on variables or values. For example:

```
$num=10+20;//+ is the operator and 10,20 are operands
```

In the above example, + is the binary + operator, 10 and 20 are operands and $num is variable.

PHP Operators can be categorized in following forms:

- Arithmetic Operators
- Assignment Operators
- Bitwise Operators
- Comparison Operators
- Incrementing/Decrementing Operators
- Logical Operators
- String Operators
- Array Operators
- Type Operators
- Execution Operators
- Error Control Operators

Arithmetic Operators

The PHP arithmetic operators are used to perform common arithmetic operations such as addition, subtraction, etc. with numeric values.

Operator	Name	Example	Explanation
+	Addition	$a + $b	Sum of operands
-	Subtraction	$a - $b	Difference of operands
*	Multiplication	$a * $b	Product of operands
/	Division	$a / $b	Quotient of operands
%	Modulus	$a % $b	Remainder of operands
**	Exponentiation	$a ** $b	$a raised to the power $b

Assignment Operators

The assignment operators are used to assign value to different variables. The basic assignment operator is "=".

Operator	Name	Example	Explanation
=	Assign	$a = $b	The value of right operand is assigned to the left operand.
+=	Add then Assign	$a += $b	Addition same as $a = $a + $b
-=	Subtract then Assign	$a -= $b	Subtraction same as $a = $a - $b
*=	Multiply then Assign	$a *= $b	Multiplication same as $a = $a * $b
/=	Divide then Assign (quotient)	$a /= $b	Find quotient same as $a = $a / $b
%=	Divide then Assign (remainder)	$a %= $b	Find remainder same as $a = $a % $b

Comparison operators allow comparing two values, such as number or string. Below the list of comparison operators are given:

Operator	Name	Example	Explanation
==	Equal	$a == $b	Return TRUE if $a is equal to $b
===	Identical	$a === $b	Return TRUE if $a is equal to $b, and they are of same data type
!==	Not identical	$a !== $b	Return TRUE if $a is not equal to $b, and they are not of same data type
!=	Not equal	$a != $b	Return TRUE if $a is not equal to $b
<>	Not equal	$a <> $b	Return TRUE if $a is not equal to $b
<	Less than	$a < $b	Return TRUE if $a is less than $b
>	Greater than	$a > $b	Return TRUE if $a is greater than $b

Logical Operators

The logical operators are used to perform bit-level operations on operands. These operators allow the evaluation and manipulation of specific bits within the integer.

Operator	Name	Example	Explanation
and	And	$a and $b	Return TRUE if both $a and $b are true
Or	Or	$a or $b	Return TRUE if either $a or $b is true
xor	Xor	$a xor $b	Return TRUE if either $ or $b is true but not both
!	Not	! $a	Return TRUE if $a is not true
&&	And	$a && $b	Return TRUE if either $a and $b are true
||	Or	$a || $b	Return TRUE if either $a or $b is true

String Operators

The string operators are used to perform the operation on strings. There are two string operators in PHP, which are given below:

Operator	Name	Example	Explanation
.	Concatenation	$a . $b	Concatenate both $a and $b
.=	Concatenation and Assignment	$a .= $b	First concatenate $a and $b, then assign the concatenated string to $a, e.g. $a = $a . $b

PHP Comments

PHP comments can be used to describe any line of code so that other developer can understand the code easily. It can also be used to hide any code.

PHP supports single line and multi line comments. These comments are similar to C/C++ and Perl style (Unix shell style) comments.

PHP Single Line Comments

There are two ways to use single line comments in PHP.

- // (C++ style single line comment)
- # (Unix Shell style single line comment)

```
<?php
// this is C++ style single line comment
# this is Unix Shell style single line comment
echo "Welcome to PHP single line comments";
?>
```

Output:

```
Welcome to PHP single line comments
```

PHP Multi Line Comments

In PHP, we can comments multiple lines also. To do so, we need to enclose all lines within /* */. Let's see a simple example of PHP multiple line comment.

```
<?php
/*
Anything placed
within comment
will not be displayed
on the browser;
*/
echo "Welcome to PHP multi line comment";
?>
```

Output:

```
Welcome to PHP multi line comment
```

PHP If Statement

PHP if statement allows conditional execution of code. It is executed if condition is true.

If statement is used to executes the block of code exist inside the if statement only if the specified condition is true.

Syntax

```
if(condition){
//code to be executed
}
```

Flowchart

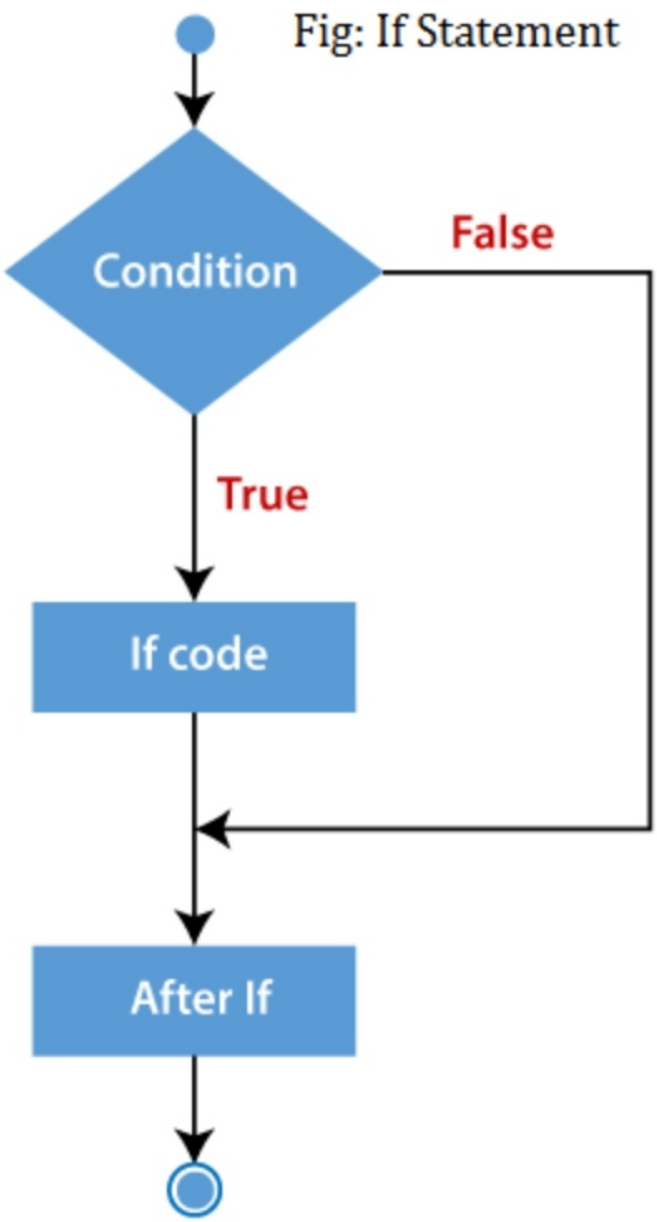


Fig: If Statement

Example

```
<?php
$num=12;
if($num<100){
echo "$num is less than 100";
}
?>
```

Output:

```
12 is less than 100
```

PHP If-else Statement

PHP if-else statement is executed whether condition is true or false.

If-else statement is slightly different from if statement. It executes one block of code if the specified condition is **true** and another block of code if the condition is **false**.

Syntax

```
if(condition){
//code to be executed if true
}else{
//code to be executed if false
}
```

Flowchart

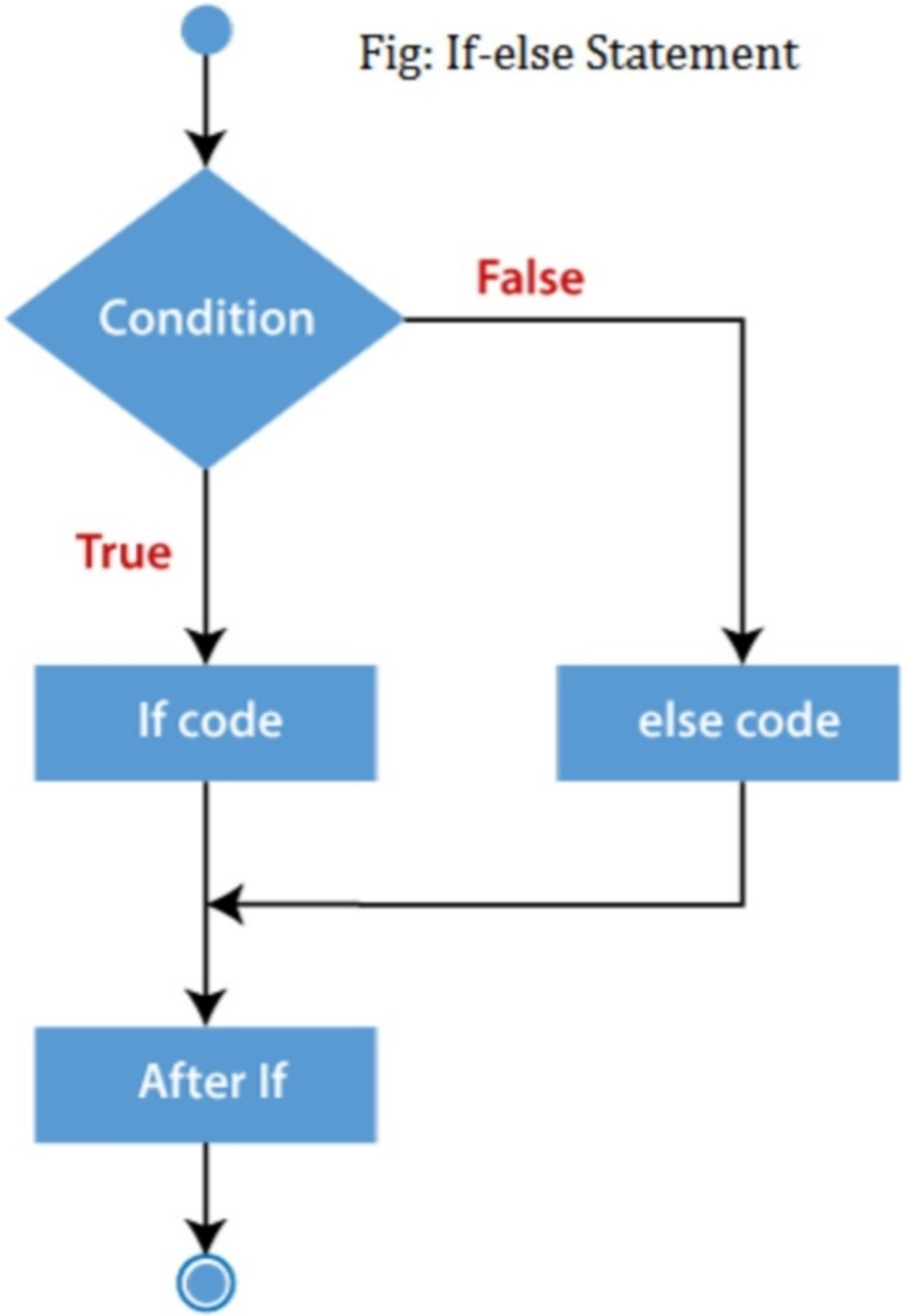


Fig: If-else Statement

Example

```
<?php
$num=12;
if($num%2==0){
echo "$num is even number";
}else{
echo "$num is odd number";
}
?>
```

Output:

```
12 is even number
```