AGIA ACADEMY

Welcome Letter

Contents

Hi

Hi there! I'm [Max](#). You're reading this because you've expressed interest in learning a thing or two about Web Development. Lucky for you, I'm interested in teaching it! Hopefully I don't suck.

To start, I've put together a learning program for us. It consists of the following:

- Topics we'll be learning
- Resources to help us learn, practice, and communicate about our progress
- List of tools used day-to-day by developers that you should get familiar with
- The process for how I'll be helping you guys along the way

I'm calling our little group Agia Academy, and you will be able to find all the resources I'm referencing here on [academy.agia.io](#). Why? For those who don't know, Agia is the name of the web design & development company I started ([agia.io](#)), so I am just giving this initiative some context, character, and using some of my business's tools to run it. Read on!

Goals

Here's my short list of goals for our program:

- Learn some front-end programming and scripting
    - HTML
    - CSS
    - JavaScript
- Get introduced to free tools and services to learn and practice web development
- Get familiar with a number of tools used in day-to-day development & programming
    - IDE's (Integrated Development Environments) and code editors like Visual Studio, VS Code, Sublime Text
    - Source control (Git)
    - Hosting (GitHub, Azure)
- Build your very own first, real website, and put it out there!

The first big milestone here is for each of you to build your own website, yourself (with my help), and put it out into the world. Sounds intimidating, but it's not so bad – I have it all more or less planned out.

For now, this won't be a timed program (ie: 4 weeks, 10 weeks, etc), as I'd like to see how we progress naturally the first time around. If this changes I will let you know.

The Very First Task (~1-2 hours)

Alright, enough intro text, when do we start *doing*?!

I feel the same way. But, before we start writing any code, I'd like to give you a really high level understanding of what you're getting into. The best, most concise, and informative guide I have found online for an introduction to web development is by Code School. So, your very first task is to read this Beginner's Guide to Web Development. I was about to embark upon the journey of writing one myself, but after going through that one, there really aren't many things I'd change or add – It's very well-done. So, go ahead – download the PDF, or bookmark the (mobile-friendly) web page, and as you start reading, keep a couple of the following things in mind.

Do not:

1. Try to memorize and/or understand every detail
2. Research every little thing you don't understand
3. Worry this might be too difficult because some of it (or a lot of it) looks like gibberish

Do:

1. Notice whether reading this piques your interest, or bores you to hell
2. Note the questions you have, so we can go over them together later

The Really Quick Second Task (~15 mins)

This is a quick one. You'll need to create a couple accounts to make sure you're able to communicate with the rest of the group (including reaching me directly), and are generally ready to get running in the world of Web Development. These include:

1. **GitHub**. This is where developers store and collaborate on code. Many other dev (and dev-learning) services require or allow you to log in with a GitHub account, so this will be your primary development-related account. So, go here and click **Sign up**: https://github.com/
2. **Gitter**. You'll want real-time communication when you're learning this stuff. Email is too tedious, and waiting for the next online meeting (that you might not even be able to make) is too long. So, we use a modern chat platform that's geared towards developers, and those learning development (you'll see how later). Sign up here: https://gitter.im/ . You'll see an option to sign in using your GitHub account (told you!), so make sure to use that. Then, join our chatroom here and say hi: https://gitter.im/Agia-Academy/Lobby . **Make sure to download the Gitter apps for your desktop and phone** (here: https://gitter.im/#apps-panel) so you get notifications, and can reach us quickly without needing to go to the website and sign in every time. This last part is key, otherwise you're sure to be out of touch and out of reach.

The Very Long Third Task Designed to Give You a Job (~2,000 hours)

That's not a typo, the 2,000 hours is for real. But don't get intimidated, that just means there's an excellent, comprehensive learning program set up for you, and you won't run out of new things to learn in the world of development for a while. **Quick note**: the "build your own website" part of all this

will happen somewhere during this part, and not after you've completed 2,000+ hours of learning, so don't worry about that piece.

The main program we'll be using is called *Free Code Camp*, and you should go sign up for it right now, here: https://www.freecodecamp.com/ . It'll link up with your GitHub (told you!) and Gitter accounts, and I (and the rest of our group) will be there to make sure you don't ever get stuck, and always keep moving ahead and learning more. You'll notice that *Free Code Camp* also has their own community and Gitter chatroom where you are also most welcome to interact and post questions. Or just stick with us. Or use both. You've got options, now use them!

(Optional) Why Free Code Camp

A quick aside on why I picked *Free Code Camp*, and not one of many other online dev learning programs out there. I personally vetted many of them, and there are a few reasons:

1. **It's free**. Can't beat that. But most importantly, despite being free it's not low-quality, and you aren't locked out of certain "pay-for" content, like many other "free-at-first" programs.
2. **It teaches exactly the technologies I planned to teach, in the order I planned to teach them**. I had a very specific idea that inspired what I wanted to teach at Agia Academy, and in what order. I felt a lot of schools and self-learning resources out there got this very important part very wrong. Finding that *Free Code Camp's* curriculum happened to agree exactly on what that idea is was excellent, and reassuring.
   P.S. If you're curious, those technologies and their order is: *HTML > CSS > JavaScript > Node.JS.* I (and apparently *Free Code Camp*) strongly feel that this is the most effective path for someone with 0 experience to be on their way to becoming an effective Web Developer.
3. **They give you real projects**. At the end of large sections, *Free Code Camp* will task you with working on a *real* website or application, that *really* is (or will be) used by some Non-Profit organization out there. While we'll be working on real things as well (like your own website), another opportunity to step out of the sandbox learning environment is awesome, and the fact that the work is all for good causes is a cherry on top. I'm very excited to get to contribute to this piece of their curriculum myself (and certainly help you along, too)!

In Conclusion (and how this will work week-to-week)

So, you've read the Beginner's Guide to Web Development and didn't get scared away. You created your GitHub and Gitter accounts, downloaded the Gitter apps for your phone and laptop/desktop, and said hi to everyone in our chatroom. Finally, you've signed up for Free Code Camp, and are ready to start their lessons. Now what?!

Well, now you start the *Free Code Camp* curriculum, solve their challenges one by one, and learn as much as you can, as fast as you can! When you inevitably get stuck, and/or simply have questions, you have 3 options for help.

1. Weekly Agia Academy online meetings

Trust me, I understand, the best way for you to ask a question and for me to answer it is if we talk. We'll do this online, twice a week, using one of the many video conferencing tools out there. I've reserved us a room in one such tool, that we can always meet in, here: https://appear.in/agia-academy (feel free to click and check it out now). If there are serious issues with this one, we'll switch to a

different tool. The key is that we can hear/see each other, and can share our screens to go over examples.

For now, these sessions won't be recorded (a bit too much overhead), and the main purpose is for you to have a chance to ask questions and get past things you're stuck on. If you miss a session – no worries! But the more you attend, the faster you'll learn, and the less time you'll spend being stuck. I may also occasionally talk about or go over a topic outside of *Free Code Camp* that I think is important or good for you to know. The place and the schedule of the weekly online meetings (as well as reminders and any changes) will all appear in our Agia Academy Gitter Chatroom.
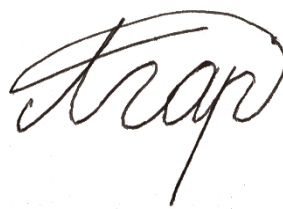
2. Agia Academy Gitter Chatroom

This is available anytime – throw a question or just a note in there any time of day or night, and I (or anyone else!) will get back to you with something useful ASAP.

3. Free Code Camp Gitter Chatroom

This is also available anytime, and they have a pretty big community. Feel free to use this in conjunction with our own chatroom, or not, as you prefer. I'm in there myself, and may occasionally field a community question or two.

That's it! Get on Free Code Camp, get in our chatroom, attend as many of our weekly online meetings as you can, and you're on your way to being a real Web Jedi. Catch you out there!

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