

Basic Syntax

The Markdown elements outlined in the original design document.



Overview

Nearly all Markdown applications support the basic syntax outlined in the original Markdown design document. There are minor variations and discrepancies between Markdown processors — those are noted inline wherever possible.



Headings

To create a heading, add number signs (#) in front of a word or phrase. The number of number signs you use should correspond to the heading level. For example, to create a heading level three (<h3>), use three number signs (e.g., `### My Header`).

Markdown	HTML	Rendered Output
# Heading level 1	<h1>Heading level 1</h1>	Heading level 1
## Heading level 2	<h2>Heading level 2</h2>	Heading level 2
### Heading level 3	<h3>Heading level 3</h3>	Heading level 3
#### Heading level 4	<h4>Heading level 4</h4>	

 Do this	 Don't do this
# Here's a Heading	#Here's a Heading

You should also put blank lines before and after a heading for compatibility.

 Do this	 Don't do this
Try to put a blank line before... # Heading ...and after a heading.	Without blank lines, this might not look right. # Heading Don't do this!

Paragraphs

To create paragraphs, use a blank line to separate one or more lines of text.

Markdown	HTML	Rendered Output
I really like using Markdown. I think I'll use it to format all of my documents from now on.	<pre><p>I really like using Markdown.</p> <p>I think I'll use it to format all of my documents from now on.</p></pre>	I really like using Markdown. I think I'll use it to format all of my documents from now on.

Paragraph Best Practices

Unless the [paragraph is in a list](#), don't indent paragraphs with spaces or tabs.



For compatibility, use trailing white space or the
 HTML tag at the end of the line.

There are two other options I don't recommend using. CommonMark and a few other lightweight markup languages let you type a backslash (\) at the end of the line, but not all Markdown applications support this, so it isn't a great option from a compatibility perspective. And at least a couple lightweight markup languages don't require anything at the end of the line — just type return and they'll create a line break.

✔ Do this	✗ Don't do this
First line with two spaces after. And the next line.	First line with a backslash after.\ And the next line.
First line with the HTML tag after. And the next line.	First line with nothing after. And the next line.

Emphasis

You can add emphasis by making text bold or italic.

Bold

To bold text, add two asterisks or underscores before and after a word or phrase. To bold the middle of a word for emphasis, add two asterisks without spaces around the letters.

Markdown	HTML	Rendered Output
I just love **bold text** .	I just love bold text.	I just love bold text .
I just love __bold text__ .	I just love bold text.	I just love bold text .
Love **is** bold	Loveisbold	Love is bold

Bold Best Practices

Markdown applications don't agree on how to handle underscores in the middle of a word. For compatibility, use asterisks to bold the middle of a word for emphasis.

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Markdown	HTML	Rendered Output
This text is ***really important***.	This text is really important.	This text is <i>really important.</i>
This text is ___really important___.	This text is really important.	This text is <i>really important.</i>
This text is __*really important*__.	This text is really important.	This text is <i>really important.</i>
This text is **_really important_**.	This text is really important.	This text is <i>really important.</i>
This is really***very***important text.	This is reallyveryimportant text.	This is really <i>very</i> important text.



✓ Do this

✗ Don't do this

This is really***very***important text.

This is really__very__important text.

Blockquotes

To create a blockquote, add a > in front of a paragraph.

```
> Dorothy followed her through many of the beautiful rooms in her castle.
```

The rendered output looks like this:

```
Dorothy followed her through many of the beautiful rooms in her castle.
```

Blockquotes with Multiple Paragraphs

Blockquotes can contain multiple paragraphs. Add a > on the blank lines between the paragraphs.

```
> Dorothy followed her through many of the beautiful rooms in her castle.  
>  
> The Witch bade her clean the pots and kettles and sweep the floor and keep the fire fed with wood.
```

The rendered output looks like this:

```
Dorothy followed her through many of the beautiful rooms in her castle.
```

```
The Witch bade her clean the pots and kettles and sweep the floor and keep the fire fed with wood.
```

Nested Blockquotes

The quarterly results look great!

- Revenue was off the chart.
- Profits were higher than ever.

Everything is going according to **plan**.

Blockquotes Best Practices

For compatibility, put blank lines before and after blockquotes.

✔ Do this	✗ Don't do this
Try to put a blank line before... > This is a blockquote ...and after a blockquote.	Without blank lines, this might not look right. > This is a blockquote Don't do this!

Lists

You can organize items into ordered and unordered lists.

Ordered Lists

To create an ordered list, add line items with numbers followed by periods. The numbers don't have to be in numerical order, but the list should start with the number one.

Markdown	HTML	Rendered Output
1. First item 2. Second item 3. Third item 4. Fourth item	 First item Second item Third item Fourth item 	1. First item 2. Second item 3. Third item 4. Fourth item

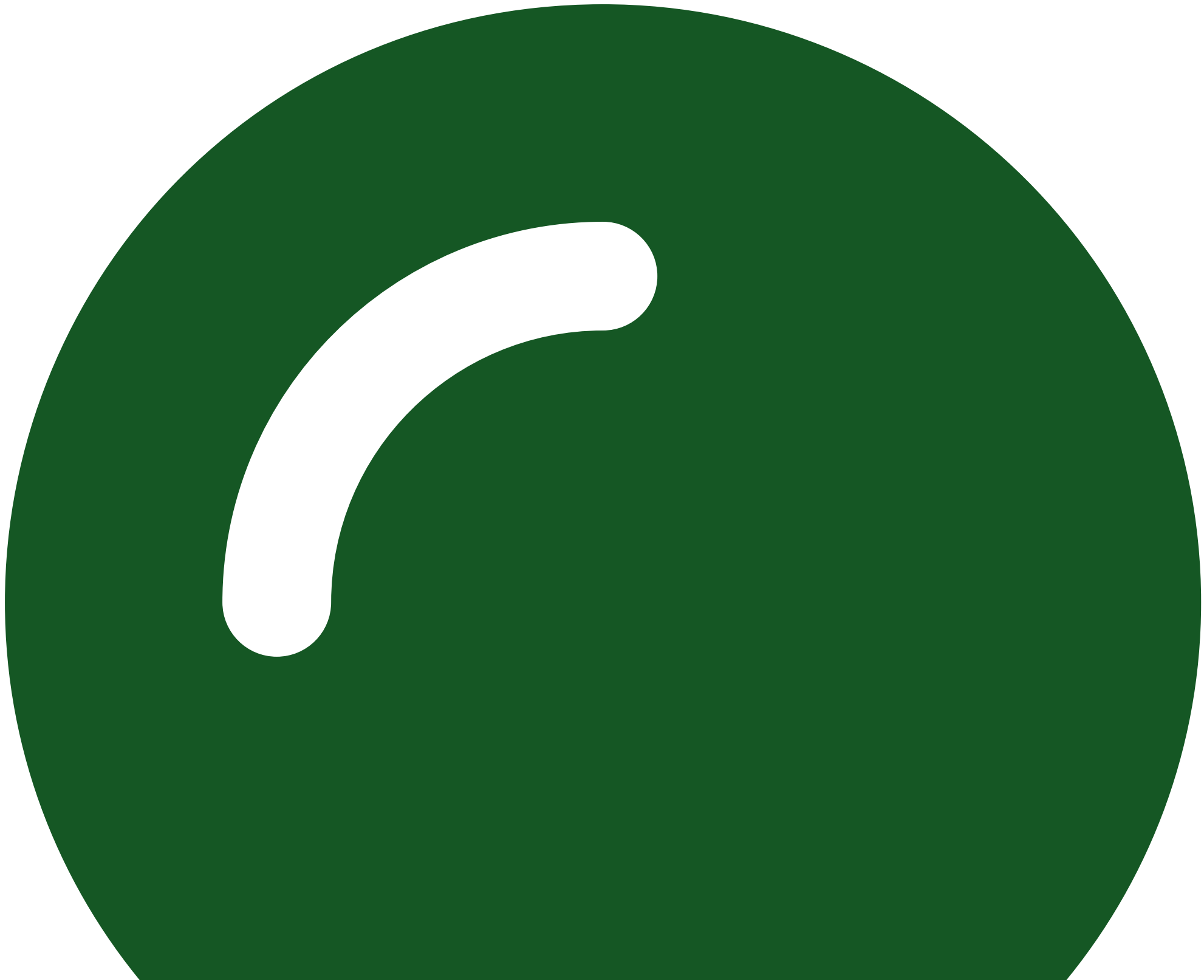
To create an unordered list, add dashes (–), asterisks (*), or plus signs (+) in front of line items. Indent one or more items to create a nested list.

Markdown	HTML	Rendered Output
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– First item– Second item– Third item– Fourth item	<pre> First item Second item Third item Fourth item </pre>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First item• Second item• Third item• Fourth item
<ul style="list-style-type: none">* First item* Second item* Third item* Fourth item	<pre> First item Second item Third item Fourth item </pre>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First item• Second item• Third item• Fourth item
<ul style="list-style-type: none">+ First item+ Second item+ Third item+ Fourth item	<pre> First item Second item Third item Fourth item </pre>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First item• Second item• Third item• Fourth item
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– First item– Second item– Third item<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Indented item– Indented item– Fourth item	<pre> First item Second item Third item Indented item Indented item Fourth item </pre>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First item• Second item• Third item<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Indented item◦ Indented item• Fourth item

Starting Unordered List Items With Numbers

If you need to start an unordered list item with a number followed by a period, you can use a backslash (\) to [escape](#) the period.

Markdown	HTML	Rendered Output



```
* This is the first list item.  
* Here's the second list item.
```

```
    I need to add another paragraph below the second list item.
```

```
* And here's the third list item.
```

The rendered output looks like this:

- This is the first list item.
- Here's the second list item.

I need to add another paragraph below the second list item.

- And here's the third list item.

Blockquotes

```
* This is the first list item.  
* Here's the second list item.
```

```
    > A blockquote would look great below the second list item.
```

```
* And here's the third list item.
```

The rendered output looks like this:

- This is the first list item.
- Here's the second list item.

A blockquote would look great below the second list item.

- And here's the third list item.

Code Blocks

[Code blocks](#) are normally indented four spaces or one tab. When they're in a list, indent them eight spaces or two tabs.



3. Close the file.

Lists

You can nest an unordered list in an ordered list, or vice versa.

```
1. First item
2. Second item
3. Third item
   - Indented item
   - Indented item
4. Fourth item
```

The rendered output looks like this:

1. First item
2. Second item
3. Third item
 - Indented item
 - Indented item
4. Fourth item

Code

To denote a word or phrase as code, enclose it in backticks (`).

Markdown	HTML	Rendered Output
At the command prompt, type `nano`.	At the command prompt, type <code><code>nano</code>.</code>	At the command prompt, type nano.

Escaping Backticks



✓ Do this

Try to put a blank line before...

...and after a horizontal rule.

✗ Don't do this

Without blank lines, this would be a heading.

Don't do this!

Links

To create a link, enclose the link text in brackets (e.g., [Duck Duck Go]) and then follow it immediately with the URL in parentheses (e.g., (https://duckduckgo.com)).

My favorite search engine is [Duck Duck Go](https://duckduckgo.com).

The rendered output looks like this:

My favorite search engine is [Duck Duck Go](https://duckduckgo.com).



You can optionally add a title for a link. This will appear as a tooltip when the user hovers over the link. To add a title, enclose it in quotation marks after the URL.

```
My favorite search engine is [Duck Duck Go](https://duckduckgo.com "The best search engine for privacy").
```

The rendered output looks like this:

My favorite search engine is [Duck Duck Go](https://duckduckgo.com).

URLs and Email Addresses

To quickly turn a URL or email address into a link, enclose it in angle brackets.

```
<https://www.markdownguide.org>  
<fake@example.com>
```

The rendered output looks like this:

<https://www.markdownguide.org>
fake@example.com

Formatting Links

To [emphasize](#) links, add asterisks before and after the brackets and parentheses. To denote links as [code](#), add backticks in the brackets.

```
I love supporting the **[EFF](https://eff.org)**.  
This is the *[Markdown Guide](https://www.markdownguide.org)*.  
See the section on [code](#code).
```

The rendered output looks like this:

I love supporting the **[EFF](https://eff.org)**.
This is the *[Markdown Guide](https://www.markdownguide.org)*.
See the section on [code](#).

An Example Putting the Parts Together

Say you add a URL as a [standard URL link](#) to a paragraph and it looks like this in Markdown:

```
In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends
of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to
eat: it was a [hobbit-hole](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hobbit#Lifestyle "Hobbit lifestyles"), and that means
comfort.
```

Though it may point to interesting additional information, the URL as displayed really doesn't add much to the existing raw text other than making it harder to read. To fix that, you could format the URL like this instead:

```
In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends
of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to
eat: it was a [hobbit-hole][1], and that means comfort.
```

```
[1]: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hobbit#Lifestyle> "Hobbit lifestyles"
```

In both instances above, the rendered output would be identical:

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a [hobbit-hole](#), and that means comfort.

and the HTML for the link would be:

```
<a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hobbit#Lifestyle" title="Hobbit lifestyles">hobbit-hole</a>
```

Link Best Practices

Markdown applications don't agree on how to handle spaces in the middle of a URL. For compatibility, try to URL encode any spaces with %20. Alternatively, if your Markdown application [supports HTML](#), you could use the `<a>` HTML tag.



Do this



Don't do this



Escaping Characters

To display a literal character that would otherwise be used to format text in a Markdown document, add a backslash (\) in front of the character.

```
\* Without the backslash, this would be a bullet in an unordered list.
```

The rendered output looks like this:

* Without the backslash, this would be a bullet in an unordered list.

Characters You Can Escape

You can use a backslash to escape the following characters.

Character	Name
\	backslash
`	backtick (see also escaping backticks in code)
*	asterisk
_	underscore
{ }	curly braces
[]	brackets
< >	angle brackets
()	parentheses
#	pound sign
+	plus sign