HTML Tables

Uses of tables

Tabular data – two-dimensional structure – rows and columns
Using tables for page layout purposes is an outdated technique
Best practice: Do not use tables to position page components.

Basic table structure

table element – represents table as a whole
tr element – represents a row – think in terms of rows, even if table makes more sense as columns
th element – represents a header cell – bold and center-aligned by default
    scope attribute – row or col – associates header with rest of row or column - accessibility
td element – represents a data cell – non-bold and left-aligned by default
text-align property – left, center, right, justify – controls alignment of contents within cells
    To center table itself, set its left and right margins to auto
caption element – contains a textual caption for the table – must be first child of table element
border property used to display borders around cells – not inherited, so apply to cells directly
border-collapse property – value of collapse to allow adjacent cells to share a single border
    Apply to table element, not individual cells

Accessible tables

Screen readers must linearize tables – read them row by row
Use scope attributes on each header to inform screen reader of where it applies

Advanced table structure

Individual cells can span multiple rows and/or multiple columns
    rowspan attribute – number of rows to span – applicable to th or td elements
    colspan attribute – number of columns to span – applicable to th or td elements
Best practice: Ensure that all rows of a table account for the same number of cells
The rows of a table can be sectioned to enhance its structure or facilitate presentation
    thead element – collects rows that form table's header
    tbody element – collects rows that form table's body
    tfoot element – collects rows that form table's footer