JavaScript Arrays: The Difference Between [] and { }

By [David Walsh](#) on May 30, 2008   💬 **6**   🐦   f   8+   🤖   ฿

Using Moo 1.2 has taught me a lot about JavaScript. Of course, that means I've made a lot of mistakes but that seems to be the best way for me to learn. While browsing the Moo source, I'd always wondered the difference between arrays using brackets ([]) and braces ({}). Here's what I learned.

{Track:js}

Use brackets for an array of simple values.

```
//examples
var answers = ['yes','no','maybe'];
var names = ['David','Kristina','Charlie','Angela'];
```
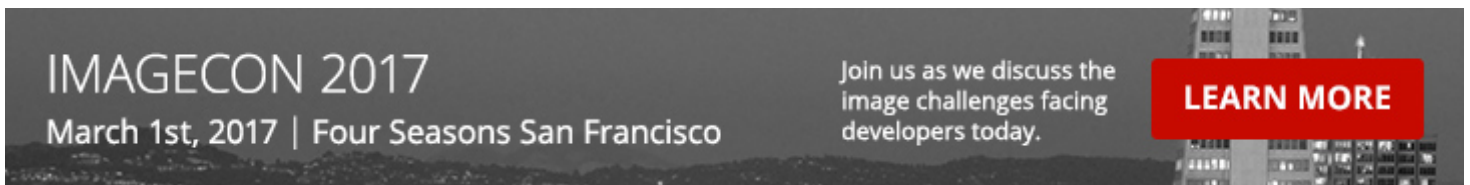
Use braces for key => value arrays and objects/properties.

```
//example - random array
var programmer = { 'name':'David Walsh', 'url':'https://davidwalsh.name', 'girl':'Kristina'}

//example - used for an object's properties
var Element.implement({
getText: function(){
return this.get('text');
}
});
```

This is similar to PHP's array system.

```
$arr = array('name'=>'David','position'=>'Programmer');
```

Have anything to add? Please share!

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I'm 31 years old and feel like I've been in the web development game for centuries. We knew forever that layouts in CSS were a nightmare and we all considered flexbox our savior. Whether it turns out that way remains to be seen but flexbox does easily...

Discussion

Tim Novinger

This is interesting. So if you use []'s in a key=>value array it just won't work or it's simply improper usage?

I must admit, I've wondered this myself with the MOO as they seem to have pretty creative looking code conventions (that really make a lot of sense).

david

@Tim: That's what I get from it. Please let me know if I'm wrong.

Rasmus

I feel like you're missing one of the finer points in this bracket/brace post; braces define Objects – not Arrays!

The following are essentially the same:

```
var myArray = [];
var myArray = new Array();
```

... as are:

```
var myObject = {};
var myObject = new Object();
```

Javascript is by no means perfect – so you'll have to know the pitfalls, like erroneously mixing keys and indexes in an Array (like you can do in PHP – bad).
As javascript doesn't have associative arrays Objects are the closest thing.

Kyle

Ahh!! I am so enlightened by that! Thank you! That makes so much sense now! Too many exclamations!! I need to stop but can't!

On a serious note, that does clarify a few questions I had.

Mantasha Zaara

Thanks David

U solved my problem. I am first time using Javascript in my website and i was getting one problem with one line.

```
mycarousel_itemList[counter]=
[{url: "ID,'thumbnail', true); ?>",link: "",title: ""}]
;
```

and u solved it ... thanks again...regards

RD

Thanks Rasmus. This is what Exactly i was looking for.

Name	Email	Website

Wrap your code in `<pre class="{language}"></pre>` *tags, link to a GitHub gist, JSFiddle fiddle, or CodePen pen to embed!*

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