

Understanding the HTML `<article>` Element

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1 Overview of `<article>` Element

1.1 Definition

The `<article>` element in HTML is a semantic element that represents a self-contained composition in a document, page, application, or site. This could be a forum post, a magazine or newspaper article, a blog entry, a user-submitted comment, an interactive widget, or any other independent item of content.

1.2 Purpose and Usage

- To demarcate independent, self-contained content that is meant to be independently distributable or reusable.
- To hold content that makes sense on its own and that could be syndicated (e.g., in an RSS feed).
- To enhance the accessibility and semantic richness of web content, aiding search engines and other tools in understanding the structure and significance of web content.

2 Characteristics of `<article>` Element

2.1 Independence

Content in an `<article>` element should make sense on its own and be separable from the rest of the site or page content.

2.2 Nested Usage

`<article>` elements can be nested. For example, individual blog posts (articles) can contain comments represented as `<article>` elements nested within the main `<article>` element for the blog post.

3 Examples of <article> Usage

```
<article>
  <h2>Blog Post Title</h2>
  <p>Content of the blog post...</p>
  <section>
    <h3>Comments</h3>
    <article>
      <p>Comment by User...</p>
    </article>
    <article>
      <p>Another comment by another User...</p>
    </article>
  </section>
</article>
```

4 Comparing with Similar Elements

4.1 <section> vs. <article>

While both <section> and <article> are semantic elements used to structure content, <section> is used to group related content within a document, whereas <article> is meant for self-contained, syndicable content.

4.2 <div> vs. <article>

<div> is a non-semantic container element used for styling purposes, while <article> is a semantic element that represents meaningful content.

5 Best Practices

- Use <article> for content that makes sense independently of the rest of the site content.
- Include headings (e.g., <h1>, <h2>, etc.) within <article> elements to define the structure.
- Do not use <article> for content that does not make sense on its own or that is purely stylistic.