

# Declaring the encoding of the page: the <meta> tag

You use the meta element with the charset attribute in your HTML page to indicate to the browser the character set you will be using in the page.

```
<meta charset="utf-8">
```

Alternatively, you can also use http-equiv and content attributes.

```
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html;  
charset=utf-8">
```

We recommend using the first one because it is much less complicated. You should also always use 'utf-8'.

## WHERE TO PLACE IT?

The meta declaration belongs inside the <head> element, and should be specified within the first 1024 bytes of your page. So the earlier it is mentioned in your code, the better.

W3C recommends placing it immediately after the opening <head> tag.

```
<!DOCTYPE html>  
<html lang="en">  
  <head>  
    <meta charset="utf-8">  
    ...  
  </head>  
</html>
```

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## Knowledge check 1.4.2 (not graded)

What does character encoding do? Check all that apply (2 correct answers!).

☐ helps translate page from one language to another

☐ acts like a dictionary that helps translate code points into bytes that can be stored in memory.

☐ decodes bytes into code points

☐ provides support for search engines to process your HTML documents correctly

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