**✅ What Are <meta> Tags in HTML?**

<meta> tags in the <head> section of an HTML document provide **metadata**—information **about the page**, not displayed directly to the user. They are essential for **SEO**, **browser behavior**, **character encoding**, and **social media integration**.

**📋 Common Uses of <meta> Tags**

| **Use Case** | **Example** | **Purpose** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Character Encoding** | <meta charset="UTF-8"> | Tells the browser how to interpret characters. Avoids issues with special characters. |
| **Page Description** | <meta name="description" content="Free tutorials on web development."> | Helps search engines understand your page. Affects search snippet. |
| **Keywords (deprecated for SEO)** | <meta name="keywords" content="HTML, CSS, JavaScript"> | Previously used for SEO. Mostly ignored now. |
| **Author** | <meta name="author" content="John Doe"> | Indicates who created the document. |
| **Viewport (for responsive design)** | <meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1.0"> | Makes the site mobile-friendly by scaling layout. |
| **Refresh/Redirect** | <meta http-equiv="refresh" content="5; url=https://example.com"> | Redirects to another page after 5 seconds. |
| **Cache Control** | <meta http-equiv="cache-control" content="no-cache"> | Tells the browser not to cache the page. |
| **Social Media (Open Graph / Twitter Cards)** | <meta property="og:title" content="My Page Title"> <meta name="twitter:card" content="summary\_large\_image"> | Enables rich previews when sharing on Facebook, Twitter, etc. |
| **Content-Type (legacy)** | <meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=UTF-8"> | Older way to specify encoding. Use charset="UTF-8" instead. |

**✅ Example: Recommended Basic Meta Tags**

html

CopyEdit

<head>

<meta charset="UTF-8">

<meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1.0">

<meta name="description" content="Learn HTML, CSS, and JavaScript from scratch.">

<meta name="author" content="Jane Smith">

<meta property="og:title" content="Learn Web Development">

<meta property="og:description" content="Step-by-step tutorials for beginners.">

<meta property="og:image" content="https://example.com/thumbnail.jpg">

<meta name="twitter:card" content="summary\_large\_image">

<title>Learn Web Development</title>

</head>

**✅ Summary**

* <meta> tags help with SEO, responsiveness, character encoding, and browser behavior.
* Some are critical (charset, viewport), others are optional but useful (description, og:title).
* They do **not** display content on the page, but **influence how the page is interpreted and shared**.