**Session:** All web applications work through HTTP protocol, which is stateless. That means HTTP does not remember or record details of any request. It only takes the request to the web server, and then it serves the response back to the browser.

This is not enough, as user identity is required for operations followed by login(for example, to access authenticated data from database). So, a session is created upon user login, and it can be used to hold any information/attributes required between requests until logout.

A session can be defined as a server-side storage of information that is desired to persist throughout the user’s interaction with the web site or web application.

Instead of storing large and constantly changing information via cookies in the user’s browser, only a unique identifier is stored on the client side (called a ‘session id’). This session is passed to the web server every time the browser makes an HTTP request (i.e. a page link or AJAX request). The web application pairs this session id with it’s internal database and retrieves the stored variables for use by the requested page.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Details** | **PHP syntax** |
| To start a session | session\_start() |
| To access/set/modify the session variable and it’s value | $\_SESSION[‘varname’] = value |
| To remove all session variables | session\_unset() |
| To destroy the session | session\_destroy() |

For more details: <http://php.net/manual/en/book.session.php>

**Cookies:** A cookie is a small piece of text stored on user’s computer by their browser. Common uses for cookies are authentication, storing of site preferences, shopping cart items, and server session identification.

Each time the users’ web browser interacts with a web server, it will pass the cookie information to the web server. Only the cookies stored by the browser that relate to the domain in the requested URL will sent to the server. This means that cookies that relate to [www.example.com](http://www.example.com) will not be sent to [www.exampledomain.com](http://www.exampledomain.com)

To set cookies from the **server side**,

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Details** | **PHP syntax** |
| To create/modify a cookie | setcookie(name\*, value, expires, path, domain, secure, httponly) |
| To access a cookie | $\_COOKIE[‘cookie name’] |
| To delete a cookie | setcookie(name, value, expiration date in the past) |

For more details: <https://secure.php.net/manual/en/function.setcookie.php>

To set cookies from the **client side**,

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Details** | **JS syntax** |
| To create/modify a cookie | document.cookie=”key=value; expires=Thu, 01 Jan 1970 00:00:00; path=/; domain=www.example.com ” |
| To access all cookies | var x = document.cookie; |
| To delete a cookie | Set a past expiration date |

For more details: <https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/API/Document/cookie>