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HTML Form Attributes

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This chapter describes the different attributes for the HTML `<form>` element.

The Action Attribute

The `action` attribute defines the action to be performed when the form is submitted.

Usually, the form data is sent to a file on the server when the user clicks on the submit button.

In the example below, the form data is sent to a file called "action_page.php". This file contains a server-side script that handles the form data:

Example

On submit, send form data to "action_page.php":

```
<form action="/action_page.php">
  <label for="fname">First name:</label><br>
  <input type="text" id="fname" name="fname" value="John"><br>
  <label for="lname">Last name:</label><br>
  <input type="text" id="lname" name="lname" value="Doe"><br><br>
  <input type="submit" value="Submit">
</form>
```

[Try it Yourself »]

Tip: If the `action` attribute is omitted, the action is set to the current page.

The Target Attribute

The `target` attribute specifies where to display the response that is received after submitting the form.

The `target` attribute can have one of the following values:

Value	Description
_blank	The response is displayed in a new window or tab
_self	The response is displayed in the current window
_parent	The response is displayed in the parent frame
_top	The response is displayed in the full body of the window
framename	The response is displayed in a named iframe

The default value is `_self` which means that the response will open in the current window.

Example

Here, the submitted result will open in a new browser tab:

```
<form action="/action_page.php" target="_blank">
```

[Try it Yourself »]

The Method Attribute

The `method` attribute specifies the HTTP method to be used when submitting the form data.

The form-data can be sent as URL variables (with `method="get"`) or as HTTP post transaction (with `method="post"`).

The default HTTP method when submitting form data is GET.

Example

This example uses the GET method when submitting the form data:

```
<form action="/action_page.php" method="get">
```

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Example

This example uses the POST method when submitting the form data:

```
<form action="/action_page.php" method="post">
```

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Notes on GET:

- Appends the form data to the URL, in name/value pairs
- NEVER use GET to send sensitive data! (the submitted form data is visible in the URL!)
- The length of a URL is limited (2048 characters)
- Useful for form submissions where a user wants to bookmark the result
- GET is good for non-secure data, like query strings in Google

Notes on POST:

- Appends the form data inside the body of the HTTP request (the submitted form data is not shown in the URL)
- POST has no size limitations, and can be used to send large amounts of data.
- Form submissions with POST cannot be bookmarked

Tip: Always use POST if the form data contains sensitive or personal information!

The Autocomplete Attribute

The `autocomplete` attribute specifies whether a form should have autocomplete on or off.

When autocomplete is on, the browser automatically complete values based on values that the user has entered before.

Example

A form with autocomplete on:

```
<form action="/action_page.php" autocomplete="on">
```

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The Novalidate Attribute

The `novalidate` attribute is a boolean attribute.

When present, it specifies that the form-data (input) should not be validated when submitted.

Example

A form with a novalidate attribute:

```
<form action="/action_page.php" novalidate>
```

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HTML Exercises

Test Yourself With Exercises

Exercise:

Add a submit button, and specify that the form should go to "/action_page.php".

```
<form         ="/action_page.php">
Name: <input type="text" name="name">

<               >
</form>
```

Start the Exercise

List of All <form> Attributes

Attribute	Description
accept-charset	Specifies the character encodings used for form submission
action	Specifies where to send the form-data when a form is submitted
autocomplete	Specifies whether a form should have autocomplete on or off
enctype	Specifies how the form-data should be encoded when submitting it to the server (only for method="post")
method	Specifies the HTTP method to use when sending form-data
name	Specifies the name of the form
novalidate	Specifies that the form should not be validated when submitted
rel	Specifies the relationship between a linked resource and the current document
target	Specifies where to display the response that is received after submitting the form

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