

Pokedex React Tutorial

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Pokedex React Tutorial - T.O.C.

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Preface

Asumptions

The reader of this tutorial should have a basic understanding of web based technologies such as html, css and javascript.

Versions used

- node: 14 (LTS)
- yarn: 1.22.5
- react: 17

Code Examples

Reading a tutorial can give you insights into a tech stack, but writing code and testing it gives you a good feeling of learning to work with React. All code is available on [Github](#).

Commands and CLI

All commands in this tutorial are run in a bash shell on linux and not tested in windows based terminals like command prompt or Powershell.

I. Introduction

Chapter 1. Typescript Primer

1.1. What is Typescript? A quick overview

- superset of javascript
- adding typescript to your project
 - installing typescript
 - adding tsconfig
 - adding package.json script
- typing
 - types
 - interfaces
- classes
- enums

Chapter 2. Project Setup

2.1. What are we building?

In this tutorial we'll be building a pokedex react app. We'll do so by implementing the commonly used component/container pattern (representational/logical components).

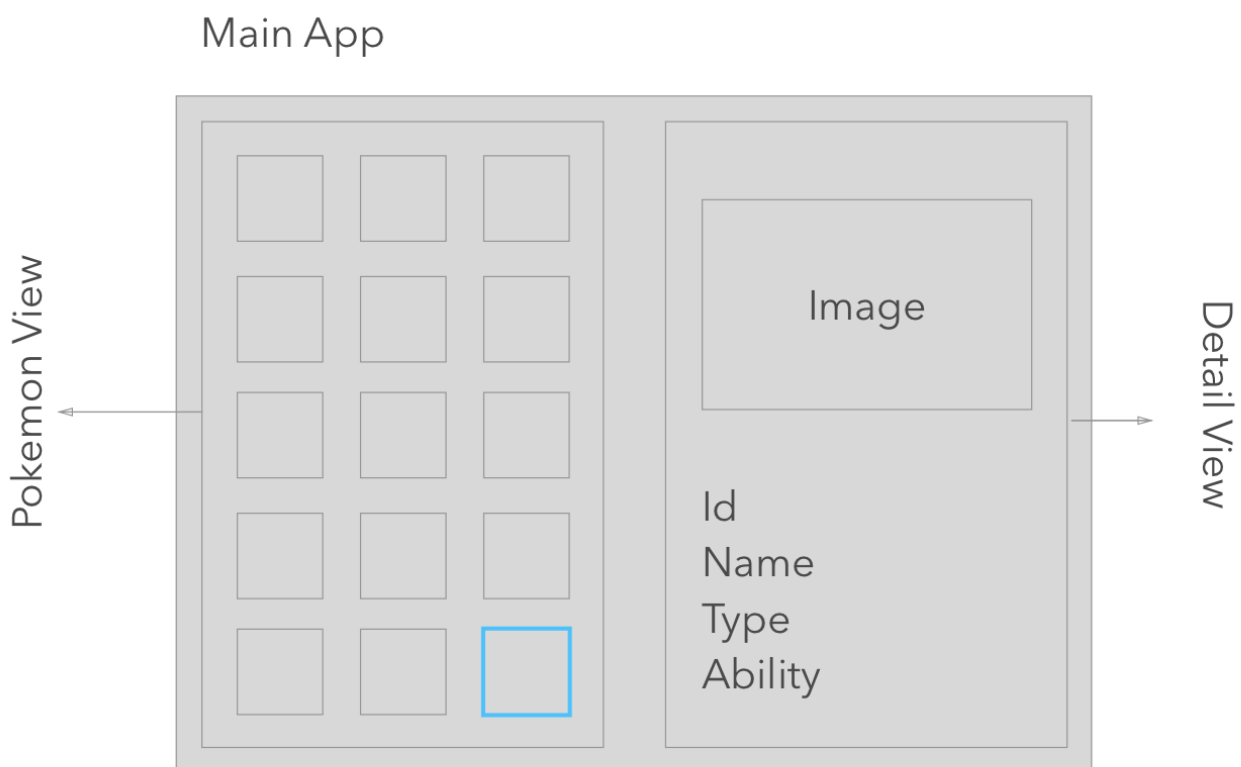
We'll also touch visual testing and documentation by writing stories for Storybook and use Jest for component testing and snapshot testing.

Finally we'll introduce redux into our project for managing state and thunk middleware to handle asynchronous api calls.

This setup might seem overkill for a project of this size and there are better solutions to handle state than through redux for such a small project, but the purpose of this tutorial is to teach you some commonly used technologies and patterns within the React ecosystem.

2.1.1. Wireframe

Our Application has a very basic layout consisting of 2 columns, in the left hand column we'll display a list of selectable pokemons, while in the right side column we'll display either the details of the selected pokémon or a placeholder text.



2.1.2. Datasource

All our Pokémon information will be pulled from the [Poke API](#). This is a standard REST-API, although at the time of writing they are going into beta with their GraphQL api.

This API holds an extensive source of information about all different Pokémons, going from names,

to types, to abilities and more. If you like this tutorial go give those guys your support.

2.2. Creating a new React Project

Before we start creating a new React project we should have a little talk about what React is and isn't.

React is an open source javascript **library** that's used for building user interfaces and single page applications. Although there are other popular frameworks around, React stands out compared to other frameworks like Angular and Vue.js by being:

- **Declarative** instead of imperative
- **Not opinionated**, except on how to render views, React doesn't care how you structure or build your project.
- **Lightweight**
- **Library not a framework**, React focusses on creating components and building pages, solutions like state management and routing aren't part of React.js, but are managed by the community.

NOTE

Since React isn't opinionated you'll often find different solutions for the same problem i.e.: Flux vs Redux for state management, css vs styled components for styling,...

2.2.1. Using create-react-app to scaffold a new React project

Creating a new react app is as easy as running one command, so let's get started. Open up your terminal and run `yarn create react-app pokedex --template typescript`, this will create a new directory pokedex and populates it with a default react project structure and files. If all went well you should see output similar to this

Success! Created pokedex at
Inside that directory, you can run several commands:

```
yarn start
  Starts the development server.

yarn build
  Bundles the app into static files for production.

yarn test
  Starts the test runner.

yarn eject
  Removes this tool and copies build dependencies, configuration files
  and scripts into the app directory. If you do this, you can't go back!
```

We suggest that you begin by typing:

```
cd pokedex
yarn start
```

Happy hacking!
Done in 45.15s.

Inside your pokedex folder you should have a file structure that looks like this:

```
pokedex
|_ public
|_ ...
|_ src
|_ ...
|_ package.json
|_ tsconfig.json
|_ README.md
```

Let's quickly discuss the structure and some of the files in our pokedex folder:

- **public/** this folder contains our static files like index.html, favicon, etc.
- **src/** this folder contains all your source that makes up your application.
- **package.json** this file contains the details of your project including but not limited to dependencies, tslint config, build scripts,...
- **tsconfig.json** in order to compile typescript we need a tsconfig file telling how to compile the project.

So now that we have our project setup under our belts, let's get started by creating our first component.

II. Components & Containers

Chapter 3. First Component: PokeListItem

3.1. Component: PokeListItem

3.1.1. Styling with css

3.1.2. Styling with Styled Components

3.2. Visual testing & documentation with Storybook

3.2.1. Setting up storybook

3.3. Quality through testing

3.3.1. Testing components with Jest

3.3.2. Snapshot testing with Jest

Chapter 4. Composed Components: building components out of components

In the previous chapter we saw how we can build a simple standalone component, although pretty basic this example already showed how versatile a tool like React can be.

Thanks to tooling like Storybook we have a visual tool to show and document our components with and with Jest we made sure our components are tested.

4.1. Children

As you saw in the previous chapter, React components can be composed from different DOM elements. However if we always had to create react components out of DOM elements the reusability would soon be non-existent. So how exactly can we create composed components without having to repeat ourselves?

Children! Children are a special kind of prop in React that represent content that can be included in your component. This property accepts everything that is a valid React Element, every React component, DOM-element and String is a valid child of a react component.

NOTE

Writing reusable code is one of the most important principles in software development. It is aimed at reducing the repetition of software patterns through means of abstraction. This principle is commonly known as the DRY principle (Don't Repeat Yourself)

Take a look at the examples below and see for yourself:

```

const ChildComponent: FC<any> = () => (<h1>I am a child component.</h1>);

const ComponentWithChildren: FC<PropsWithChildren<any>> = ({children}) => ( ①
  <div>
    {children} ②
  </div>
);

const DomElementChildren: FC<any> = () => (
  <ComponentWithChildren>
    <p>FooBar paragraph</p> ③
  </ComponentWithChildren>
);

const StringChildren: FC<any> = () => (
  <ComponentWithChildren>
    Hello World! ④
  </ComponentWithChildren>
);

const ReactComponentChildren = () => (
  <ComponentWithChildren>
    <ChildComponent />
    <ChildComponent /> ⑤
  </ComponentWithChildren>
);

```

- ① Before we can start using our children we first need to make typescript aware we are using PropsWithChildren as a type, this is a convenience type that's located in the React package. This type also takes a generic, in this case any, to represent the props other than children. We use object deconstruction to extract the children out our properties.
- ② In order for React to know where to render the children we need to declare the correct position of the children.
- ③ This is an example of how to pass DOM elements as children to a React component.
- ④ This is an example of how to pass a String to a react component as a child.
- ⑤ This is an example of how to pass another React component as a child to the parent React component, as shown here, you are not restricted to just passing 1 child, you can add multiple children, as well as a combination of all 3 different React Elements.

NOTE Using children to compose more complex structures is called *composition*.

4.2. Component: PokeList



As an example of a composed component we'll be building the `PokeList`, this is a simple component that provides a surrounding div with a background image. This div will hold our `PokeListItem`s we created in the previous chapter.

We'll build this component in 2 different ways, just like in the previous chapter. Why? Because just as with styling React isn't opinionated on how you build your components. So in our first example we'll build a `PokeList` component that accepts children and we'll pass our `PokeListItem`s as children. In the second example we'll pass an array of pokemons which will be used to generate the children.

Before we begin, create a new folder under `src/components` called `PokeList` with a file `index.tsx` inside.

4.2.1. `PokeList`: creating a component that accepts children

We'll start by creating the first example, where we'll pass the `PokeListItem`s from the previous chapter as children.

First we'll need the `PokeList` Component, as stated in the previous chapter you're free to choose how you do your styling (css/SASS/styled-components/...), but for the sake of consistency we'll use styled-components here and every other example throughout this tutorial.

`src/components/PokeList/index.tsx`

```
import React, { FC, PropsWithChildren } from "react";
import styled from "styled-components";

const StyledPokeList = styled.div`
  background-color: #bff9ff;
  box-shadow: inset 0 0 1.25rem rgba(0, 0, 0, 0.5);
  padding: 1rem;
  display: flex;
  justify-content: space-between;
`;

const PokeList: FC<PropsWithChildren<any>> = ({children}) => (
  <StyledPokeList>
    {children}
  </StyledPokeList>
);

export default PokeList;
```

We then can use this component in the following fashion:

```
const pokemons: any[] = [
  {
    id: 1,
    sprite:
      "https://raw.githubusercontent.com/PokeAPI/sprites/master/sprites/pokemon/1.png",
  }, {
    id: 2,
    sprite:
      "https://raw.githubusercontent.com/PokeAPI/sprites/master/sprites/pokemon/2.png",
  },
];

const PokeOverview = () => (
  <PokeList>
    { pokemons.map(pokemon => (
      <PokeListItem
        sprite={pokemon.sprite}
        onClick={() => {console.log(`you clicked pokemon: ${pokemon}`)}}
        key={pokemon.id} ❶
      </PokeListItem>
    ))}
  </PokeList>
);
```

❶ When creating react components through a map function you have to provide a unique key to

every react component you created. In our case it's the pokemon ID.

4.2.2. PokeList: passing properties

Now that we've seen how we can build a component with children through composition, we'll now take a look at how to render our `PokeListItems` when passing properties. This approach has some advantages over the method with passing children, most important we can typecheck the properties we're expecting to receive.

In our case, since `Pokemon` is a complex type, we'll have to create an interface first to define our type, for now we'll keep it together with our component but in a later phase we'll move this into it's own file.

`src/components/PokeList/index.tsx`


```

import React, { FC } from "react";
import styled from "styled-components";
import PokeListItem from "../PokeListItem"; ❶

export interface Pokemon { ❷
  id: number;
  sprite: string;
}

export interface PokeListProps {
  pokemons: Pokemon[]; ❸
}

const PokeListFrame = styled.div`
  background-color: #bfff9f;
  box-shadow: inset 0 0 20px rgba(0, 0, 0, 0.5);
  padding: 1rem;
  display: flex;
  justify-content: space-between;
`;

const handlePokeListItemClick = () => { ❹
  console.log("you have clicked a poke list item!");
};

const PokeList: FC<PokeListProps> = ({ pokemons }) => ( ❺
  <PokeListFrame>
    {pokemons.map((pokemon: Pokemon) => ( ❻
      <PokeListItem
        sprite={pokemon.sprite}
        onClick={handlePokeListItemClick}
        key={pokemon.id}
      />
    ))}
  </PokeListFrame>
);

export default PokeList;

```

- ❶ Import the PokeListItem component into our PokeList component.
- ❷ We first define the structure of our complex Pokemon type through an interface.
- ❸ We define pokemons as an array of Pokemon type objects in our component's properties interface.
- ❹ Since we moved everything inside the pokelist, we also have to create an onClick handler to pass down to the PokeListItem.
- ❺ We pass PokeListProps as type to FC and extract the pokemons property out of it using object deconstruction.

- ⑥ The map function that renders the children is now included in the PokeList component, by doing this we move all responsibilities concerning the rendering of this component's child components to the PokeList component. This makes our code less error prone and more future proof.

After this refactoring we can utilize this component in a more concise way, like this:

```
const pokemons: Pokemon[] = [
  {
    id: 1,
    sprite:
      "https://raw.githubusercontent.com/PokeAPI/sprites/master/sprites/pokemon/1.png",
  }, {
    id: 2,
    sprite:
      "https://raw.githubusercontent.com/PokeAPI/sprites/master/sprites/pokemon/2.png",
  },
];

const PokeOverview = () => (
  <PokeList pokemons={pokemons} />
);
```

NOTE

When splitting a piece of software in distinct sections of code that each addresses it's own responsibility we talk about *Separation of Concerns*. This is a design principle in software development that makes your code modular and reusable. i.e.: presentational components vs logical components

4.3. Quality, Quality, Quality

As stated in the previous chapter, quality is often an overlooked aspect of software development. However, if you, by accident, break a piece of code you've written 3 months ago that didn't had automated testing on it. It's a real PITA to fix.

So do yourself a favor and create a habit of writing tests/documentation right after you've written your component (or even better before).

Chapter 5. Stateless vs Stateful Components

III. State management & Middleware

Chapter 6. redux stuff

Chapter 7. Middleware

7.1. Redux Thunk

7.2. React router

Chapter 8. What's next?

8.1. Securing your application

8.2. Serverless