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How to Create a Text Box Dynamically in JavaScript

By **Kevin Lee**, Contributor



Dynamic text boxes don't have to exist until someone needs them.
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Some call it magic -- the ability to make objects appear suddenly out of nowhere. You can create this kind of magic on your website using a few lines of JavaScript. Text boxes, for example, are good HTML elements to use when learning to make objects appear dynamically. Instead of building them into your code when you design your Web page, add text boxes as needed and impress site visitors at the same time.

Text Box Creation

Before making a text box materialize, you must understand what a text box is. HTML knows it as an input tag as shown in the following example:

This input tag creates a text box that has two important attributes; id and type. The type attribute, whose value is "text," tells browsers to create a text box instead of another type of control such as a button. The id attribute, which is optional, can come in handy if you need to manipulate the text box later. The value option, which is also optional, contains the value you'd like to see in the text box when the Web page opens.

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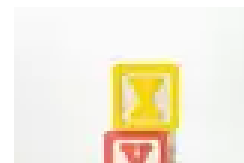


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Dynamic Text Boxes

HTML doesn't care when you define an element's attributes as long as you give them values somewhere. This means that you have the ability to create a text box element dynamically and set its attributes any time you like. The `document.createElement` function makes this possible as shown below:

```
var box = document.createElement("input");
```

That's all it takes to create an HTML input element and assign it to a variable named "box." The box object doesn't become a text box until you give its type attribute a value of "text" as shown in this example:

```
box.type = "text";
```

Web Page Integration

This code below appends the text box to the HTML document using the useful `appendChild` function:

```
document.body.appendChild(box);
```

If you would like to append the text box after a specific control, use the following statement instead:

```
document.getElementById("some_Element_ID").appendChild(box);
```

Replace "some_Element_ID" with the name of the element after which you would like to append the text box. For example, If that element was a button whose ID was "button1," the appendChild statement would appear as follows:

```
document.getElementById("button1").appendChild(box);
```

Optional Attributes

Your new text box will work perfectly using this code. Simply create a JavaScript function that contains the statement and call it whenever you need a text box. However, you can also set the text box's value and ID attributes as follows:

```
box.value = boxValue; box.id = boxID;
```

Pass the values of boxValue and boxID to the function, and it applies those attributes to the text box. If you assign an ID value, you can use it later to update the text box's properties as shown in the example below:

```
var boxObject = document.getElementById(boxID);  
boxObject.style.backgroundColor = "red";
```

The first statement obtains a reference to the text box and the last statement changes the text box's background color to red.

References

- [Mozilla Developer Network: Document.createElement](#)
 - [Microsoft MSDN: AppendChild Method](#)
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Resources

- [Tizag: Javascript Tutorial – Intro](#)

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After majoring in physics, Kevin Lee began writing professionally in 1989 when, as a software developer, he also created technical articles for the Johnson Space Center. Today this urban Texas cowboy continues to crank out high-quality software as well as non-technical articles covering a multitude of diverse topics ranging from gaming to current affairs.

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