Always Declare Document Type

Always declare the document type as the first line in your document.

The correct document type for HTML is:

<!DOCTYPE html>

### **Good:**

<body>  
<p>This is a paragraph.</p>  
</body>

### **Bad:**

<BODY>  
<P>This is a paragraph.</P>  
</BODY>

## Close All HTML Elements

In HTML, you do not have to close all elements (for example the <p> element).

However, we strongly recommend closing all HTML elements, like this:

### **Good:**

<section>  
  <p>This is a paragraph.</p>  
  <p>This is a paragraph.</p>  
</section>

### **Bad:**

<section>  
  <p>This is a paragraph.  
  <p>This is a paragraph.  
</section>

## Use Lowercase Attribute Names

HTML allows mixing uppercase and lowercase letters in attribute names.

However, we recommend using lowercase attribute names, because:

* Mixing uppercase and lowercase names looks bad
* Developers normally use lowercase names
* Lowercase look cleaner
* Lowercase are easier to write

### **Good:**

<a href="https://www.w3schools.com/html/">Visit our HTML tutorial</a>

### **Bad:**

<a HREF="https://www.w3schools.com/html/">Visit our HTML tutorial</a>

## Always Quote Attribute Values

HTML allows attribute values without quotes.

However, we recommend quoting attribute values, because:

* Developers normally quote attribute values
* Quoted values are easier to read
* You MUST use quotes if the value contains spaces

### **Good:**

<table class="striped">

### **Bad:**

<table class=striped>

### **Very bad:**

This will not work, because the value contains spaces:

<table class=table striped>

## Always Specify alt, width, and height for Images

Always specify the alt attribute for images. This attribute is important if the image for some reason cannot be displayed.

Also, always define the width and height of images. This reduces flickering, because the browser can reserve space for the image before loading.

### **Good:**

<img src="html5.gif" alt="HTML5" style="width:128px;height:128px">

### **Bad:**

<img src="html5.gif">

## Spaces and Equal Signs

HTML allows spaces around equal signs. But space-less is easier to read and groups entities better together.

### **Good:**

<link rel="stylesheet" href="styles.css">

### **Bad:**

<link rel = "stylesheet" href = "styles.css">

## Avoid Long Code Lines

When using an HTML editor, it is NOT convenient to scroll right and left to read the HTML code.

Try to avoid too long code lines.

## Blank Lines and Indentation

Do not add blank lines, spaces, or indentations without a reason.

For readability, add blank lines to separate large or logical code blocks.

For readability, add two spaces of indentation. Do not use the tab key.

### **Good:**

<body>  
  
<h1>Famous Cities</h1>  
  
<h2>Tokyo</h2>  
<p>Tokyo is the capital of Japan, the center of the Greater Tokyo Area,  
and the most populous metropolitan area in the world.  
It is the seat of the Japanese government and the Imperial Palace,  
and the home of the Japanese Imperial Family.</p>  
  
</body>

### **Bad:**

<body>  
  
  <h1>Famous Cities</h1>  
  
  <h2>Tokyo</h2>  
  
  <p>  
    Tokyo is the capital of Japan, the center of the Greater Tokyo Area,  
    and the most populous metropolitan area in the world.  
    It is the seat of the Japanese government and the Imperial Palace,  
    and the home of the Japanese Imperial Family.  
  </p>  
  
</body>

### **Good Table Example:**

<table>  
  <tr>  
    <th>Name</th>  
    <th>Description</th>  
  </tr>  
  <tr>  
    <td>A</td>  
    <td>Description of A</td>  
  </tr>  
  <tr>  
    <td>B</td>  
    <td>Description of B</td>  
  </tr>  
</table>

### **Good List Example:**

<ul>  
  <li>London</li>  
  <li>Paris</li>  
  <li>Tokyo</li>  
</ul>

## Never Skip the <title> Element

The <title> element is required in HTML.

The contents of a page title is very important for search engine optimization (SEO)! The page title is used by search engine algorithms to decide the order when listing pages in search results.

The <title> element:

* defines a title in the browser toolbar
* provides a title for the page when it is added to favorites
* displays a title for the page in search-engine results

So, try to make the title as accurate and meaningful as possible:

<title>HTML Style Guide and Coding Conventions</title>

## Omitting <html> and <body>?

An HTML page will validate without the <html> and <body> tags:

However, we strongly recommend to always add the <html> and <body> tags!

Omitting <body> can produce errors in older browsers.

Omitting <html> and <body> can also crash DOM and XML software.

## Omitting <head>?

The HTML <head> tag can also be omitted.

Browsers will add all elements before <body>, to a default <head> element.

However, we recommend using the <head> tag.

## Close Empty HTML Elements?

In HTML, it is optional to close empty elements.

### **Allowed:**

<meta charset="utf-8">

### **Also Allowed:**

<meta charset="utf-8" />

If you expect XML/XHTML software to access your page, keep the closing slash (/), because it is required in XML and XHTML.

## Add the lang Attribute

You should always include the lang attribute inside the <html> tag, to declare the language of the Web page. This is meant to assist search engines and browsers.

## Meta Data

To ensure proper interpretation and correct search engine indexing, both the language and the character encoding <meta charset="charset"> should be defined as early as possible in an HTML document:

<!DOCTYPE html>  
<html lang="en-us">  
<head>  
  <meta charset="UTF-8">  
  <title>Page Title</title>  
</head>

## Setting The Viewport

The viewport is the user's visible area of a web page. It varies with the device - it will be smaller on a mobile phone than on a computer screen.

You should include the following <meta> element in all your web pages:

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

This gives the browser instructions on how to control the page's dimensions and scaling.

The width=device-width part sets the width of the page to follow the screen-width of the device (which will vary depending on the device).

The initial-scale=1.0 part sets the initial zoom level when the page is first loaded by the browser.

Here is an example of a web page without the viewport meta tag, and the same web page with the viewport meta tag: