

What You Should Already Know

Before you continue you should have a basic understanding of the following:

HTML

CSS

JavaScript

If you want to study these subjects first, find the tutorials on our Home page.

What is PHP?

PHP is an acronym for "PHP: Hypertext Preprocessor"

PHP is a widely-used, open-source scripting language

PHP scripts are executed on the server (XAMPP)

PHP is free to download and use

PHP is an amazing and popular language!

It is powerful enough to be at the core of the biggest blogging system on the web (WordPress)!

It is deep enough to run large social networks!

It is also easy enough to be a beginner's first server-side language!

What is a PHP File?

PHP files can contain text, HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and PHP code

PHP code is executed on the server, and the result is returned to the browser as plain HTML

PHP files have extension ".php"

What Can PHP Do?

- *PHP can generate dynamic page content*
- *PHP can create, open, read, write, delete, and close files on the server*
- *PHP can collect form data*
- *PHP can send and receive cookies*
- *PHP can add, delete, modify data in your database*
- *PHP can be used to control user-access*
- *PHP can encrypt data*

With PHP you are not limited to output HTML. You can output images, PDF files, and even Flash movies. You can also output any text, such as XHTML and XML.

Why PHP?

- *PHP runs on various platforms (Windows, Linux, Unix, Mac OS X, etc.)*
- *PHP is compatible with almost all servers used today (Apache, IIS, etc.)*
- *PHP supports a wide range of databases*
- *PHP is free. Download it from the official PHP resource: www.php.net*
- *PHP is easy to learn and runs efficiently on the server side*

What's new in PHP 7

- *PHP 7 is much faster than the previous popular stable release (PHP 5.6)*
- *PHP 7 has improved Error Handling*
- *PHP 7 supports stricter Type Declarations for function arguments*
- *PHP 7 supports new operators (like the spaceship operator: <=>)*

What Do I Need?

To start using PHP, you can:

Find a web host with PHP and MySQL support

Install a web server on your own PC, and then install PHP and MySQL

Use a Web Host With PHP Support

If your server has activated support for PHP you do not need to do anything.

Just create some .php files, place them in your web directory, and the server will automatically parse them for you.

You do not need to compile anything or install any extra tools.

Because PHP is free, most web hosts offer PHP support.

Set Up PHP on Your Own PC

However, if your server does not support PHP, you must:

install a web server

install PHP

install a database, such as MySQL

The official PHP website (PHP.net) has installation instructions for PHP:

<http://php.net/manual/en/install.php>

Basic PHP Syntax

A PHP script can be placed anywhere in the document.

A PHP script starts with <?php and ends with?>:

```
<?php
```

```
// PHP code goes here
```

```
?>
```

The default file extension for PHP files is ".php".

A PHP file normally contains HTML tags, and some PHP scripting code.

Below, we have an example of a simple PHP file, with a PHP script that uses a built-in PHP function "echo" to output the text "Hello World!" on a web page:

```
<?php  
echo "Hello World!";  
?>
```