HTML Forms

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HTML Form Example

First name:

Mickey

Last name:

Mouse

Submit

Try it Yourself »

The <form> Element

The HTML `<form>` element defines a form that is used to collect user input:

```
<form>
.
form elements
.
</form>
```

An HTML form contains **form elements**.

Form elements are different types of input elements, like text fields, checkboxes, radio buttons, submit buttons, and more.

The <input> Element

The `<input>` element is the most important form element.

The `<input>` element can be displayed in several ways, depending on the **type** attribute.

Here are some examples:

Type	Description
<input type="text">	Defines a one-line text input field
<input type="radio">	Defines a radio button (for selecting one of many choices)
<input type="submit">	Defines a submit button (for submitting the form)

> You will learn a lot more about input types later in this tutorial.

Text Input

`<input type="text">` defines a one-line input field for **text input**:

Example

```
<form>
  First name:<br>
  <input type="text" name="firstname"><br>
  Last name:<br>
  <input type="text" name="lastname">
</form>
```

Try it Yourself »

This is how it will look like in a browser:

First name:

Last name:

Note: The form itself is not visible. Also note that the default width of a text field is 20 characters.

Radio Button Input

`<input type="radio">` defines a **radio button**.

Radio buttons let a user select ONE of a limited number of choices:

Example

```
<form>
  <input type="radio" name="gender" value="male" checked> Male<br>
  <input type="radio" name="gender" value="female"> Female<br>
  <input type="radio" name="gender" value="other"> Other
</form>
```

Try it Yourself »

This is how the HTML code above will be displayed in a browser:

● Male
○ Female
○ Other

The Submit Button

`<input type="submit">` defines a button for **submitting** the form data to a **form-handler**.

The form-handler is typically a server page with a script for processing input data.

The form-handler is specified in the form's **action** attribute:

Example

```
<form action="/action_page.php">
  First name:<br>
  <input type="text" name="firstname" value="Mickey"><br>
  Last name:<br>
  <input type="text" name="lastname" value="Mouse"><br><br>
  <input type="submit" value="Submit">
</form>
```

Try it Yourself »

This is how the HTML code above will be displayed in a browser:

First name:
Mickey
Last name:
Mouse

Submit

The Action Attribute

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

Normally, the form data is sent to a web page on the server when the user clicks on the submit button.

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

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

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

The Target Attribute

The target attribute specifies if the submitted result will open in a new browser tab, a frame, or in the current window.

The default value is " _self " which means the form will be submitted in the current window.

To make the form result open in a new browser tab, use the value " _blank ":

Example

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

Try it Yourself »

Other legal values are " _parent ", " _top ", or a name representing the name of an iframe.

The Method Attribute

The `method` attribute specifies the HTTP method (**GET** or **POST**) to be used when submitting the form data:

Example

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

Try it Yourself »

or:

Example

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

Try it Yourself »

When to Use GET?

The default method when submitting form data is GET.

However, when GET is used, the submitted form data will be **visible in the page address field**:

```
/action_page.php?firstname=Mickey&lastname=Mouse
```

Notes on GET:

- Appends form-data into the URL in name/value pairs
- The length of a URL is limited (about 3000 characters)
- Never use GET to send sensitive data! (will be visible in the URL)
- Useful for form submissions where a user wants to bookmark the result
- GET is better for non-secure data, like query strings in Google

When to Use POST?

Always use POST if the form data contains sensitive or personal information. The POST method does not display the submitted form data in the page address field.

Notes on POST:

- POST has no size limitations, and can be used to send large amounts of data.
- Form submissions with POST cannot be bookmarked

The Name Attribute

Each input field must have a `name` attribute to be submitted.

If the `name` attribute is omitted, the data of that input field will not be sent at all.

This example will only submit the "Last name" input field:

Example

```
<form action="/action_page.php">
  First name:<br>
  <input type="text" value="Mickey"><br>
  Last name:<br>
  <input type="text" name="lastname" value="Mouse"><br><br>
  <input type="submit" value="Submit">
</form>
```

Try it Yourself »

Grouping Form Data with <fieldset>

The `<fieldset>` element is used to group related data in a form.

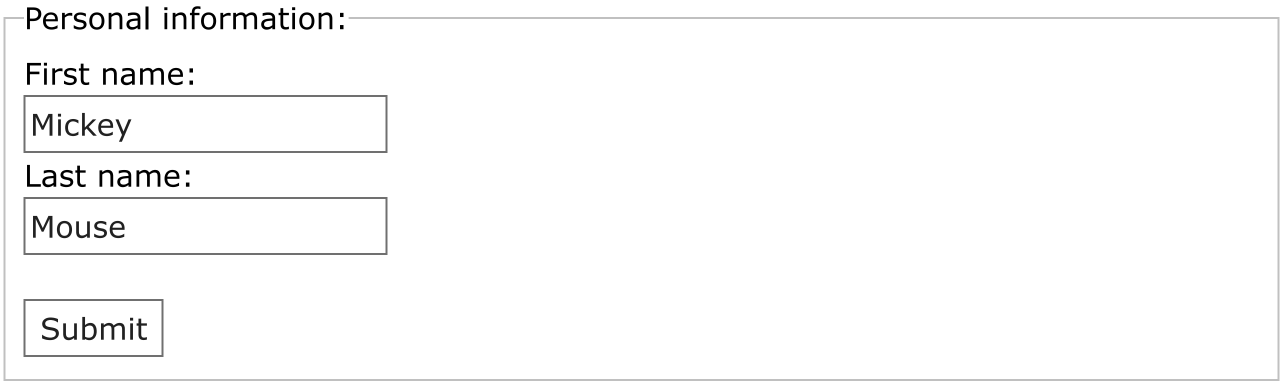
The `<legend>` element defines a caption for the `<fieldset>` element.

Example

```
<form action="/action_page.php">
  <fieldset>
    <legend>Personal information:</legend>
    First name:<br>
    <input type="text" name="firstname" value="Mickey"><br>
    Last name:<br>
    <input type="text" name="lastname" value="Mouse"><br><br>
    <input type="submit" value="Submit">
  </fieldset>
</form>
```

Try it Yourself »

This is how the HTML code above will be displayed in a browser:



Personal information:

First name:

Mickey

Last name:

Mouse

HTML Exercises

Test Yourself With Exercises

Exercise:

In the form below, add an input field with the type "button" and the value "OK".

```
<form>
<                                >
</form>
```

Submit Answer »

Start the Exercise

Here is the list of all `<form>` attributes:

Attribute	Description
accept-charset	Specifies the charset used in the submitted form (default: the page charset).
action	Specifies an address (url) where to submit the form (default: the submitting page).
autocomplete	Specifies if the browser should autocomplete the form (default: on).
enctype	Specifies the encoding of the submitted data (default: is url-encoded).

method	Specifies the HTTP method used when submitting the form (default: GET).
name	Specifies a name used to identify the form (for DOM usage: document.forms.name).
novalidate	Specifies that the browser should not validate the form.
target	Specifies the target of the address in the action attribute (default: _self).

> You will learn more about the form attributes in the next chapters.

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