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HTML Scroll Box
Create a Box With Scrolling Text Using CSS and HTML

Jeffrey Coolidge/Photodisc/Getty Images

By Jennifer Kyrnin

An HTML scroll box is a box that adds scroll bars to the right side and bottom when the contents of the box are larger than the box dimensions. In other words, if you have a box that can fit around 50 words, and you have text of 200 words, an HTML scroll box will put scroll bars up to let you see the additional 150 words. In standard HTML that would simply push the extra text outside of the box.

Making HTML scroll is fairly easy. You just need to set the width and height of the element you want to scroll and then use the CSS overflow property to set how you want the scrolling to occur.
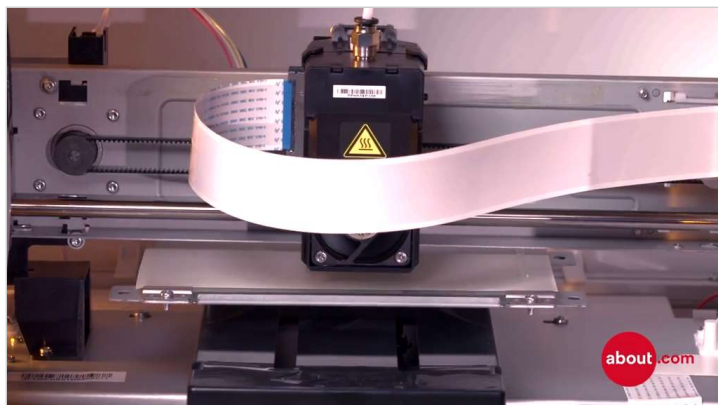
What to Do with Extra Text?

When you have more text than will fit in the space on your layout, you have a few options:

- Rewrite the text so that it is shorter and will fit
- Allow the text to flow beyond the bounds and hope the layout can flex to support it
- Cut off the text where it overflows
- Add scroll bars (usually vertical for text) so that the space scrolls to show the extra text

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The best option is typically the last option: create a scrolling text box. Then extra text can still be read, but your design is not compromised.

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HTML and CSS for this would be:

```
<div style="overflow: auto; width:300px; height:200px;">
text here....
</div>
```

The `overflow: auto;` tells the browser to add scroll bars if they are needed to keep the text from overflowing the boundaries of the div. But in order for this to work, you also need the [width](#) and [height](#) style properties set on the div, so that there are boundaries to overflow.

You can also [cut off the text](#) by changing `overflow: auto;` to `overflow: hidden;`. If you leave out the overflow property, the text will [spill over the boundaries of the div](#).

But You Can Add Scroll Bars to More than Just Text

If you have a large image that you'd like to display in a smaller space, you can [add scroll bars around it](#) in the same way you would with text.

```
<p style="overflow:auto; width: 300px; height:300px;">
<img src="images/shasta_with_disc.jpg" alt="Shasta
playing frisbee" width="400" height="509" /> </p>
```

In [this example](#) the 400x509 image is inside a 300x300 paragraph.

Tables Can Benefit from Scroll Bars

Long tables of information can get very difficult to read very quickly, but by putting them inside a div of a limited size and then adding the overflow property, you can generate tables with lots of data that don't take up extreme space on your page.

The easiest way is just like with images and text, just add a div around the table, set the width and height of that div, and add the overflow property:

```
<div style="width: 300px; overflow: auto; height:
100px;">
<table>   <thead>
    <tr>
      <th>Name</th>
      <th>Phone</th>
    </tr>
  </thead>
```

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```
    ....
  </tbody>
</table>
</div>
```

One thing that happens when you do this is a horizontal scroll bar usually appears because the browser assumes that the chrome of the scroll bars is overlapping the table. There are many ways to fix this from changing the width of the table and others. But my favorite is to simply turn off horizontal scrolling with the CSS 3 property [overflow-x](#). Just add `overflow-x: hidden;` to the div, and that will [remove the horizontal scroll bar](#). Be sure to test this, as there might be content that disappears.

```
<div style="width: 300px; overflow: auto; overflow-x:
hidden; height: 100px;">
```

Firefox Supports Using the TBODY Tags for Overflow

One really nice feature of the Firefox browser is that you can use the overflow property on inner table tags like [tbody](#) and [thead](#) or [tfoot](#). This means that you can set scroll bars on the table contents, and the header cells stay anchored above them. This only works in Firefox, which is too

bad, but it is a nice feature if your readers only use Firefox. Browse to [this example](#) in Firefox to see what I mean.

```html
<table style="width:300px;">
  <thead>
    <tr>
      <th>Name</th>
      <th>Phone</th>
    </tr>
  </thead>
  <tbody style="overflow:auto; overflow-x:hidden;
height: 100px;">
    <tr>
      <td>Jennifer</td>
      <td>502-5366</td>
    </tr>
    ...
```

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- overflow-x
- Need to Set the Height of an Element to 100%? Here's Some Ways To Do So.
- <tbody></tbody>

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By Jennifer Kyrnin

Question: How do you build an HTML table from scratch?

HTML tables can be very tricky to build in a text editor, but once you learn how to build them you'll be glad you did. Knowing how to build HTML tables from scratch is a good indication that you're an intermediate or advanced HTML author.

Answer:
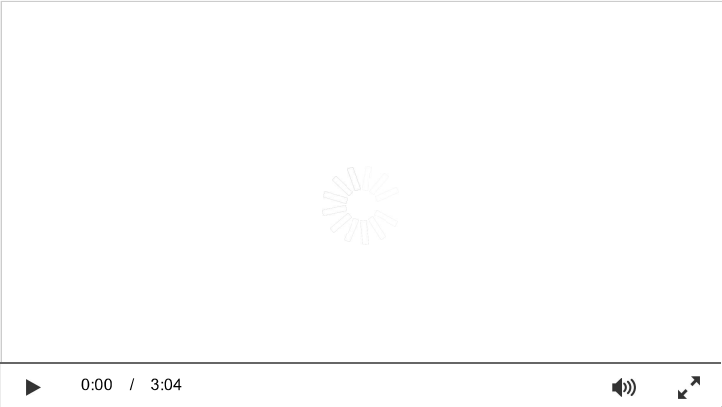
HTML tables require only three tags to build:

- [TABLE](#)
  This is the outermost tag in a table. All table tags are contained inside the `<table>` start tag and `</table>` end tag.

- **TR**
  HTML tables are made up of rows and columns. The TR element defines a table row. Every time a `<tr>` tag appears, a new table row is defined.

- **TD**
  Finally there are the table cells (or table data). The `<td>` tag defines the beginning of a new column in the table. This is where you write the contents of the table cells.

The best way to start is to think about tables as being a group of cells in a row, and a group of rows in a table. If you visualize your content displayed in a spreadsheet, each cell of the spreadsheet is a TD element, each row is a TR with multiple TD elements, and the entire table is the TABLE element with multiple TR elements inside.

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First create the table:

```
<table>
</table>
```

Be sure to include both the start tag `<table>` and end tag `</table>` so that your HTML is valid and it works in all browsers.

Within that TABLE element, create your first table row using the TR element:

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then you must include the closing tag.

Then create the cells in that table row using the TD element. In my example, I'll add three table cells:

```
<table>
  <tr>
    <td>
    <td>
    <td>
</table>
```

Just like the TR element, HTML5 and HTML 4.01 do not require a closing `</td>` tag, but you should include it if you are writing XHTML.

The last thing you do is include your content within the cells.

```
<table>
  <tr>
    <td>column 1
    <td>column 2
    <td>column 3
</table>
```

To expand your table, add more rows. Be sure to include the same number of columns in each row that you add.

Here is an example of a simple one row table.

More Advanced Tables

There are also a few other elements (and two attributes) that can be useful in building HTML tables:

- TH
  This element creates table header cells. Use it the same way you use TD elements, only for header cells.

- THEAD
  This element defines the rows of the table that are part of the head of the table.

- TFOOT
  This element defines the rows of the table that are part of the foot of the table.

- TBODY
  This element defines the rows of the table that are part of the body of the table.

- The colspan attribute

The first type of row you should add is a row of header cells with the TH element. You add headers the same way you add table cells.

```
<table>
  <tr>
    <th>header 1
    <th>header 2
    <th>header 3
  <tr>
    <td>column 1
    <td>column 2
    <td>column 3
</table>
```

Just like the TD element, the closing </th> tag is not required unless you are writing XHTML.

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The THEAD, TFOOT, and TBODY define areas of the table as the head, foot, and body. They are mostly used with CSS to style specific areas. But most browsers will automatically put the rows in the THEAD at the top of the table, and the rows in the TFOOT at the bottom.

```
<table>
  <thead>
    <tr>
      <th>Col 1 Header</th>
      <th>Col 2 Header</th>
      <th>Col 3 Header</th>
    </tr>
  </thead>
  <tfoot>
    <tr>
      <td>Col 1 Footer</td>
      <td>Col 2 Footer</td>
      <td>Col 3 Footer</td>
    </tr>
  </tfoot>
  <tbody>
    <tr>
```

```
      <td>Column 1</td>
      <td>Column 2</td>
      <td>Column 3</td>
   </tr>
   <tr>
      <td>Row 2:1</td>
      <td>2:2</td>
      <td>2:3</td>
   </tr>
</table>
```

Here is an example of a table with THEAD, TFOOT, and TBODY. Note that the
TFOOT is the second written row, but is displayed at the bottom of the table.

The last two things you should know about when building a table are the
colspan and rowspan attributes. These allow you to create cells that are
larger than one column or row. The value of these attributes is the number
of columns or rows you want the current cell to span.

If you want a cell to span two columns, you write colspan="2". You then
remove one of the original columns in that row. For example, to change a
three column row to have one cell spanning two columns you change this
row:

```
<tr>
  <td>Column 1</td>
  <td>Column 2</td>
  <td>Column 3</td>
</tr>
```

To look like this row:

```
<tr>
  <td colspan="2">Column 1</td>
  <td>Column 3</td>
</tr>
```

Here is an example of a table with a colspan on a cell.

You use the rowspan attribute in the same way. Only instead of replacing
cells in the same row, you need to remove cells below the row with the

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```
<tr>
  <td>2:2</td>
  <td>2:3</td>
</tr>
```

And here is an example of a table with the rowspan attribute.

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- <tbody></tbody>
- Why You Should Avoid Using Nested Tables
- How to Insert 1 Table in Another (HTML)

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