

HTML Tables Guide

This document provides a comprehensive overview of HTML tables, their structure, and advanced features, as extracted from “Wiley HTML and CSS, October 2011.”

1 Why Tables?

Tables are used to display information in a grid format, suitable for data such as sports results, stock reports, train timetables, financial reports, and TV schedules. They allow complex data to be understood by referencing information on two axes (rows and columns). Each block in the grid is called a table cell, and HTML tables are written row by row.

2 Basic Table Structure

Tables are created using the following key elements:

- **<table>**: Defines the table.
- **<tr>**: Defines a table row (tr stands for table row).
- **<td>**: Defines a table cell (td stands for table data).

Example:

```
<table>
  <tr>
    <td>15</td>
    <td>15</td>
    <td>30</td>
  </tr>
  <tr>
    <td>45</td>
    <td>60</td>
    <td>45</td>
  </tr>
  <tr>
    <td>60</td>
    <td>90</td>
    <td>90</td>
  </tr>
</table>
```

Result:

```
15 15 30
45 60 45
90 90 90
```

Browsers may automatically draw borders around tables or cells, which can be controlled using CSS (pages 309–312, 337–340).

3 Table Headings

- **<th>**: Defines a table header cell (th stands for table heading), typically displayed in bold and centered.

- **scope attribute:** Indicates whether the header applies to a row (scope="row") or column (scope="col").

Example:

```
<table>
  <tr>
    <th></th>
    <th scope="col">Saturday</th>
    <th scope="col">Sunday</th>
  </tr>
  <tr>
    <th scope="row">Tickets sold:</th>
    <td>120</td>
    <td>135</td>
  </tr>
  <tr>
    <th scope="row">Total sales:</th>
    <td>$600</td>
    <td>$675</td>
  </tr>
</table>
```

Result:

	Saturday	Sunday
Tickets sold:	120	135
Total sales:	\$600	\$675

Using <th> improves accessibility for screen readers, search engine indexing, and CSS styling. Empty cells should still include <td> or <th> to ensure correct rendering.

4 Spanning Columns

The colspan attribute allows a cell to span multiple columns.

Example:

```
<table>
  <tr>
    <th></th>
    <th>9am</th>
    <th>10am</th>
    <th>11am</th>
    <th>12am</th>
  </tr>
  <tr>
    <th>Monday</th>
    <td colspan="2">Geography</td>
    <td>Math</td>
    <td>Art</td>
  </tr>
  <tr>
    <th>Tuesday</th>
    <td colspan="3">Gym</td>
    <td>Home Ec</td>
  </tr>
</table>
```

Result:

	9am	10am	11am	12am
Monday	Geography		Math	Art
Tuesday	Gym		Home Ec	

Rows with spanned cells have fewer <td> elements, as spanned cells replace adjacent ones. CSS can enhance visibility (pages 250, 337–340).

5 Spanning Rows

The rowspan attribute allows a cell to span multiple rows.

Example:

```
<table>
  <tr>
    <th></th>
    <th>ABC</th>
    <th>BBC</th>
    <th>CNN</th>
  </tr>
  <tr>
    <th>6pm - 7pm</th>
    <td rowspan="2">Movie</td>
    <td>Comedy</td>
    <td>News</td>
  </tr>
  <tr>
    <th>7pm - 8pm</th>
    <td>Sport</td>
    <td>Current Affairs</td>
  </tr>
</table>
```

Result:

	ABC	BBC	CNN
6pm - 7pm	Movie	Comedy	News
7pm - 8pm		Sport	Current Affairs

Rows affected by rowspan have fewer <td> elements. CSS can enhance visibility (pages 250, 337–340).

6 Long Tables

For long tables, use:

- **<thead>**: Contains header rows.
- **<tbody>**: Contains body rows.
- **<tfoot>**: Contains footer rows (e.g., totals).

Example:

```
<table>
  <thead>
    <tr>
```

```

        <th>Date</th>
        <th>Income</th>
        <th>Expenditure</th>
    </tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
    <tr>
        <th>1st January</th>
        <td>250</td>
        <td>36</td>
    </tr>
    <!-- additional rows -->
    <tr>
        <th>31st January</th>
        <td>129</td>
        <td>64</td>
    </tr>
</tbody>
<tfoot>
    <tr>
        <td></td>
        <td>7824</td>
        <td>1241</td>
    </tr>
</tfoot>
</table>

```

These elements improve accessibility and allow CSS styling (pages 309–312, 337–340). Some content management systems may auto-insert <thead> for rows with only <th> elements. Browsers may keep <thead> and <tfoot> visible during scrolling, though this is not universally implemented.

7 Deprecated Attributes

Older HTML used attributes like:

- **width**: Set table or cell width in pixels.
- **cellpadding**: Added space inside cells.
- **cellspacing**: Added space between cells.
- **border**: Set border width in pixels.
- **bgcolor**: Set background color using hex codes.

Example:

```

<table width="400" cellpadding="10" cellspacing="5" border="2" bgcolor="#
    efefef">
    <tr>
        <th width="150"></th>
        <th>Withdrawn</th>
        <th>Credit</th>
        <th width="150" bgcolor="#cccee">Balance</th>
    </tr>
    <tr>
        <th>January</th>
        <td>250.00</td>

```

```
<td>660.50</td>
<td bgcolor="#cccee" >410.50</td>
</tr>
</table>
```

These are outdated; use CSS instead (pages 303, 309–312, 337–340).

8 Example Table

A hosting plan comparison table:

```
<table>
  <thead>
    <tr>
      <th></th>
      <th scope="col">Home starter hosting</th>
      <th scope="col">Premium business hosting</th>
    </tr>
  </thead>
  <tbody>
    <tr>
      <th scope="row">Disk space</th>
      <td>250mb</td>
      <td>1gb</td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
      <th scope="row">Bandwidth</th>
      <td>5gb per month</td>
      <td>50gb per month</td>
    </tr>
  </tbody>
  <tfoot>
    <tr>
      <td></td>
      <td colspan="2">Sign up now and save 10%!</td>
    </tr>
  </tfoot>
</table>
```

9 Summary

- The `<table>` element creates tables, drawn row by row using `<tr>`.
- Cells are defined with `<td>` (data) or `<th>` (headers).
- `colspan` and `rowspan` allow cells to span multiple columns or rows.
- `<thead>`, `<tbody>`, and `<tfoot>` structure long tables for accessibility and styling.
- Avoid deprecated attributes like `width`, `border`, and `bgcolor`; use CSS instead.