## **Markdown: Basics**

<a href="/projects/markdown/" title="Markdown Project Page">Main</a>

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# Getting the Gist of Markdown's Formatting Syntax

This page offers a brief overview of what it's like to use Markdown. The **syntax page** provides complete, detailed documentation for every feature, but Markdown should be very easy to pick up simply by looking at a few examples of it in action. The examples on this page are written in a before/after style, showing example syntax and the HTML output produced by Markdown.

It's also helpful to simply try Markdown out; the **Dingus** is a web application that allows you type your own Markdown-formatted text and translate it to XHTML.

Note: This document is itself written using Markdown; you can see the source for it by adding '.text' to the URL.

## Paragraphs, Headers, Blockquotes

A paragraph is simply one or more consecutive lines of text, separated by one or more blank lines. (A blank line is any line that looks like a blank line -- a line containing nothing spaces or tabs is considered blank.) Normal paragraphs should not be intended with spaces or tabs.

Markdown offers two styles of headers: Setext and atx. Setext-style headers for <h1> and <h2> are created by "underlining" with equal signs (=) and hyphens (-), respectively. To create an atx-style header, you put 1-6 hash marks (#) at the beginning of the line -- the number of hashes equals the resulting HTML header level.

Blockquotes are indicated using email-style '>' angle brackets.

Markdown:

Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their country. This is just a regular paragraph.

The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog's back.

```
### Header 3

> This is a blockquote.
> This is the second paragraph in the blockquote.
> ## This is an H2 in a blockquote
```

### Output:

```
<h1>A First Level Header</h1>
<h2>A Second Level Header</h2>
Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their country. This is just a regular paragraph.
The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog's back.
<h3>Header 3</h3>

<h3>Header 3</h3>

This is a blockquote.
This is the second paragraph in the blockquote.
<h2>This is an H2 in a blockquote</h2></blockquote>
```

# **Phrase Emphasis**

Markdown uses asterisks and underscores to indicate spans of emphasis.

### Markdown:

```
Some of these words *are emphasized*.

Some of these words _are emphasized also_.

Use two asterisks for **strong emphasis**.

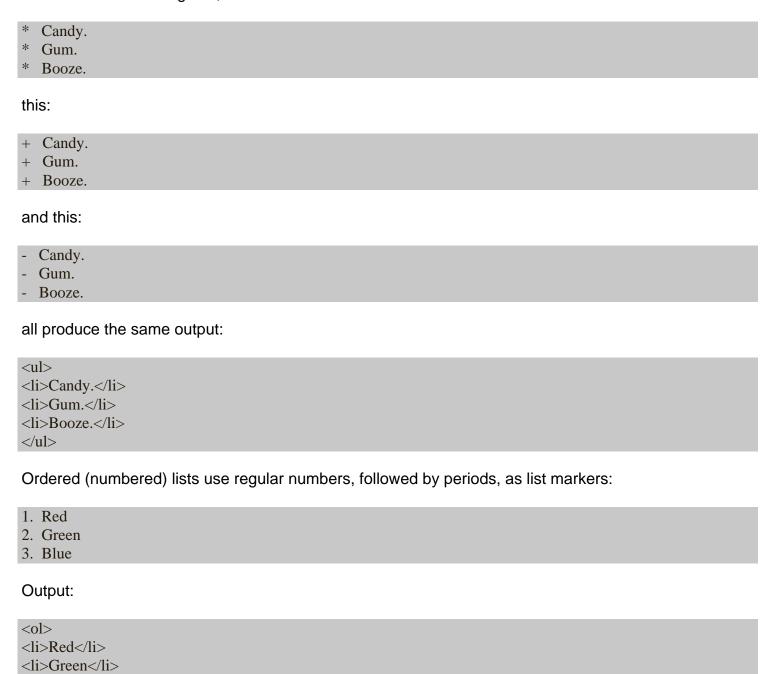
Or, if you prefer, __use two underscores instead__.
```

### Output:

```
Some of these words <em>are emphasized</em>.
Some of these words <em>are emphasized also</em>.
Use two asterisks for <strong>strong emphasis</strong>.
```

## Lists

Unordered (bulleted) lists use asterisks, pluses, and hyphens (\*, +, and -) as list markers. These three markers are interchangable; this:



If you put blank lines between items, you'll get tags for the list item text. You can create multi-paragraph list items by indenting the paragraphs by 4 spaces or 1 tab:

\* A list item.

Blue

With multiple paragraphs.

\* Another item in the list.

### Output:

```
    A list item.
    With multiple paragraphs.
    Another item in the list.

    <l>

    <l>
```

### Links

Markdown supports two styles for creating links: *inline* and *reference*. With both styles, you use square brackets to delimit the text you want to turn into a link.

Inline-style links use parentheses immediately after the link text. For example:

This is an [example link](http://example.com/).

### Output:

```
This is an <a href="http://example.com/">
example link</a>.
```

Optionally, you may include a title attribute in the parentheses:

This is an [example link](http://example.com/ "With a Title").

### Output:

```
This is an <a href="http://example.com/" title="With a Title">
example link</a>.
```

Reference-style links allow you to refer to your links by names, which you define elsewhere in your document:

```
I get 10 times more traffic from [Google][1] than from [Yahoo][2] or [MSN][3].

[1]: http://google.com/ "Google"
[2]: http://search.yahoo.com/ "Yahoo Search"
[3]: http://search.msn.com/ "MSN Search"
```

### Output:

I get 10 times more traffic from <a href="http://google.com/"</p>

```
title="Google">Google</a> than from <a href="http://search.yahoo.com/"
title="Yahoo Search">Yahoo</a> or <a href="http://search.msn.com/"
title="MSN Search">MSN</a>.
```

The title attribute is optional. Link names may contain letters, numbers and spaces, but are *not* case sensitive:

I start my morning with a cup of coffee and [The New York Times][NY Times].

[ny times]: http://www.nytimes.com/

### Output:

```
I start my morning with a cup of coffee and
<a href="http://www.nytimes.com/">The New York Times</a>.
```

## **Images**

Image syntax is very much like link syntax.

Inline (titles are optional):

![alt text](/path/to/img.jpg "Title")

Reference-style:

![alt text][id]

[id]: /path/to/img.jpg "Title"

Both of the above examples produce the same output:

<img src="/path/to/img.jpg" alt="alt text" title="Title" />

### Code

In a regular paragraph, you can create code span by wrapping text in backtick quotes. Any ampersands (&) and angle brackets (< or >) will automatically be translated into HTML entities. This makes it easy to use Markdown to write about HTML example code:

I strongly recommend against using any `<blink>` tags.

I wish SmartyPants used named entities like `—` instead of decimal-encoded entites like `—`.

Output:

```
I strongly recommend against using any 
<code>&lt;blink&gt;</code> tags.
I wish SmartyPants used named entities like 
<code>&amp;mdash;</code> instead of decimal-encoded entites like <code>&amp;#8212;</code>.
```

To specify an entire block of pre-formatted code, indent every line of the block by 4 spaces or 1 tab. Just like with code spans, &, <, and > characters will be escaped automatically.

#### Markdown:

```
If you want your page to validate under XHTML 1.0 Strict,
you've got to put paragraph tags in your blockquotes:

<br/>
<br/>
<br/>
<br/>
For example.
<br/>
```

### Output:

```
If you want your page to validate under XHTML 1.0 Strict,
you've got to put paragraph tags in your blockquotes:
<code>&lt;blockquote&gt;
<p&gt;For example.&lt;/p&gt;
</blockquote&gt;
</code>
```