Markdown: Basics

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

Getting the Gist of Markdown's Formatting Syntax

This page offers a brief overview of what it's like to use Markdown. The <u>syntax page</u> 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 <u>Dingus</u> 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:

Output:

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>.
Or, if you prefer, <strong>use two underscores instead</strong>.
```

Lists

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

```
* Candy.

* Gum.

* Booze.
```

this:

+ Candy.

```
+ Gum.
+ Booze.
```

and this:

```
Candy.Gum.
```

- Booze.

all produce the same output:

```
Candy.Gum.Booze.
```

Ordered (numbered) lists use regular numbers, followed by periods, as list markers:

```
    Red
    Green
    Blue
```

Output:

```
Red
Green
Blue
```

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

Output:

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

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:

Output:

```
I get 10 times more traffic from <a href="http://google.com/"
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 `&mdash;`
instead of decimal-encoded entites like `&#8212;`.
```

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:

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;
    &lt;p&gt;For example.&lt;/p&gt;
&lt;/blockquote&gt;
</code>
```