Front-End HTML Style Guide

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Revision: Draft

# General Formatting Rules

## Capitalization

Use lowercase only

All code has to be lowercase. This applies to HTML elements names, attributes, attributes values (unless text/CDATA).

Not Recommended:

|  |
| --- |
| <A HREF=”/”>Home</A> |

Recommended:

|  |
| --- |
| <a href=”/”>Home</a> |

## Trailing Whitespace

Remove trailing white spaces.

Trailing white spaces are unnecessary and can complicate diffs.

Not Recommended:

|  |
| --- |
| <p/>What></p>\_\_ |

Recommended:

|  |
| --- |
| <p>What?</p> |

## Indentation

Indentation should be consistent throughout the entire file. Whether you choose to use tabs or space, or 2-spaces vs. 4-spaces – just be consistent!

# General Meta Rules

## Encoding

Use UTF-8 (no BOM)

Make sure your editor used UTF-8 as character encoding, without a byte order mark. Specify the encoding in HTML templates and documents with <meta charset=”utf-8”>.

## Comments

Explain code as needed, where possible.

Use comments to explain code: What does it cover, what purpose does it server, and why is the respective solution used or preferred.

## Action Items

Mark todos and action items with TODO:.

Highlight todos by using the keyword TODO only, not other formats like @@. Append actions items after a colon like this: TODO: action item.

Recommended:

|  |
| --- |
| <!-- TODO: add other fruits -->  <ul>  <li>Apples</li>  <li>Oranges</li>  </ul> |

# HTML Style Rules

## Document Type

Use HTML5.

HTML5 (HTML syntax) is preferred for all HTML documents: <!DOCTYPE html>.

Do not close self-closing elements, ie. write <br>, not <br />.

## HTML Validity

Use valid HTML

Not Recommended:

|  |
| --- |
| <title>Page Title</title>  <article>This is an article. |

Recommended:

|  |
| --- |
| <!DOCTYPE html>  <html>  <head>  <meta charset=”utf-8”>  <title>Page Title</title>  </head>  <body>  <article>This is an article.</article>  </body>  </html> |

## Semantics

Use HTML according to its purpose.

Use elements for what they have been created for. For example, use heading elements for headings, p elements for paragraphs, a elements for anchor, etc.

Use HTML according to its purpose is important for accessibility, reuse and code efficacy reasons.

Not Recommended:

|  |
| --- |
| <div onclick=”goToRecommendations();”>All recommendations</div> |

Recommended:

|  |
| --- |
| <a href=”recommendations/”>All recommendations</a> |

## Separation of Concerns

Separate structure from presentation from behavior.

Strictly keep structure (markup), presentation (styling), and behavior(scripting) apart, and try to keep the interaction between the three to an absolute minimum.

That is, make sure documents and templates contain only HTML and HTML that is solely serving structural purposes. Move everything presentational into style sheets, and everything behavioral into scripts. In addition, keep the contact area as small as possible by linking as few style sheets and scripts as possible from documents and templates.

Separating structure from presentation from behavior is important for maintenance reasons. It is almost always more expensive to change HTML documents and templates than it is to update style sheet and scripts.

## Entity References

Do not use entity references.

There is no need to use entity references like &mdash;. &rdquo;, or &#x263a;, assuming the same encoding (UTF-8) is used for files and editors as well as among teams.

The only exceptions apply to characters with special meaning in HTML (like < and &) as well as control or “invisible” characters (like no-break spaces).

Not Recommended:

|  |
| --- |
| The currency symbol for the Euro is &ldquo;&eur;&rdquo;. |

Recommended:

|  |
| --- |
| The currency symbol for the Euro is “€”. |

## Type Attributes

Omit type attributes for style sheets and scripts.

Do not use type attributes for style sheets and scripts. Specifying type attributes in these contexts is not necessary as HTML implies text/css and text/javascript as defaults. This can be safely done even for older browsers.

Not Recommended:

|  |
| --- |
| <link rel="stylesheet" href="css/style.css" type=”text/css”> |

Recommended:

|  |
| --- |
| <link rel=”stylesheet” href=”css/style.css” |

Not Recommended:

|  |
| --- |
| <script src=”js/app.js” type=”text/javascript”></script> |

Recommended:

|  |
| --- |
| <script src=”js/app.js”></script> |

# HTML Formatting Rules

## General Formatting

Use a new line for every block, list or table element and indent every such child element.

Independent of the styling of an element (as CSS allows elements to assume a different role per display property), put every block, list or table element on a new line.

Also, indent them if they are child elements of a block, list or table element (if you run into issues around whitespace between list items it’s acceptable to put all li elements in one line).

Recommended:

|  |
| --- |
| <blockquote>  <p><em>Space</em>, the final frontier.</p>  </blockquote>  <ul>  <li>Moe</li>  <li>Curry</li>  <li>Larry</li>  </ul>  <table>  <thead>  <tr>  <th scope=”col”>Income</th>  <th scope=”col”>Taxes</th>  </tr>  </thead>  <tbody>  <tr>  <td>$5.00</td>  <td>$4.50</td>  </tr>  </tbody>  </table> |

## HTML Quotation Marks

When quoting attributes values, use double quotation marks.

Not Recommended:

|  |
| --- |
| <a href='login/' class='btn btn-secondary'>Login</a> |

Recommended:

|  |
| --- |
| <a href="login/" class="btn btn-secondary">Login</a> |