

Lesson:

Introduction to HTML entities



Topics Covered

- What is HTML Entities
- Why use HTML Entities
- Common HTML Entities

What are HTML Entities?

The HTML Entities are strings of text that start with an ampersand symbol(&) and end with a semicolon(;). These entities are commonly used to demonstrate characters that are reserved (otherwise, they would be interpreted as HTML code) and imperceptible characters such as non-breaking spaces.

Additionally, they can be substituted for other characters that are challenging to input using a conventional keyboard.

The format of HTML Entities in general -

Unset
&code;

Where code may be a,

- A decimal form like **Ë**
- A hex form like **Ë**, or stripped off leading zeros, simply **&xCB**
- A named value if available, such as **Ë**

When using a hex form, either a lowercase or uppercase may be used as well as uppercase and lowercase values for digits A-F, so **Ë**; and **Ë** and **Ë** and so on are all equivalent. Case sensitivity is not, however, guaranteed for named entities and may result in errors or wrong characters. The good style would suggest lowercase for the hex symbol and uppercase for the digits.

As an example -

demo.html

Unset

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html lang="en">
  <head>
    <meta charset="UTF-8" />
    <meta name="viewport"
content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1.0" />
    <meta http-equiv="X-UA-Compatible"
content="ie=edge" />
    <title>Anchor tag with href demo</title>
  </head>
  <body>
    <p>Numeric entity decimal: &#163</p>
    <p>Numeric entity hex: &#x00A3</p>
    <p>Named entity : &pound;</p>
  </body>
</html>
```

Browser output -

Numeric entity decimal: £

Numeric entity hex: £

Named entity : £

Why use HTML Entities?

Keyboard characters such as “<” and “>” have special meanings to HTML because they are part of HTML tags and must be encoded. Other characters, such as certain foreign language accent characters and special symbols, can be difficult to specify, depending on the keyboard being used. To address escaping of special-purpose characters and inserting a wide range of characters and symbols, character entities should be employed.

By using HTML entities, these characters can be displayed correctly on web pages and ensure that the intended meaning is conveyed to the user.

Some of the points why used HTML entities are as follows -

- Displaying special characters
- Avoiding conflicts with HTML syntax
- Supporting different character sets
- Improving accessibility

Common HTML Entities

There are many HTML entities that can be used to represent special characters and symbols. Some of the most commonly used HTML entities are as follows -

Named Entity	HTML 5 Alias	Numbered Entity	Description	Intended Rendering
&	&	&	Ampersand	&
©	©	©	Copyright	©
>	>	>	Greater than	>
<	<	<	Less than	<
"	"	"	Double quotes	“ ”
®	®	®	Registration mark	®
™	™	™	Trademark symbol	™