

# Are nested HTML comments possible?

Asked 10 years, 8 months ago   Active 5 months ago   Viewed 33k times



as per the title; is it possible to have nested comments in valid HTML? see the example below...

90

```
<p>some text</p>
```



```
<!-- comment 1
```

```
  <p>commented out html</p>
```



16

```
<!-- comment 2
```

```
  // are nested html comment allowed?
```

```
end of comment 2 -->
```

```
<p>more commented out html</p>
```

```
end of comment 1 -->
```

```
<p>some more text</p>
```

It appears not, does anybody know how I could get nested comments to work?

html

validation

comments

edited Nov 27 '17 at 22:22



Donald Duck

4,388 14 43 67

asked Jan 14 '09 at 12:32



QAZ

3,296 5 30 48

4 ...or the I don't think it possible but maybe someone with more experience than me will know! – QAZ Jan 14 '09 at 12:36

If in doubt about what is valid in HTML, I usually cut to the chase & go stringht to the standards guys. Specifically, the W3C Markup Validation Service at [validator.w3.org](http://validator.w3.org) – Mawg Aug 11 '10 at 7:05

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When you nest a comment, replace "--" with "- -". When you un-nest, reverse the procedure. It's not the `<!--` that is forbidden but the `- -`.

Example:

```
<!-- some stuff
<!-- - some inner stuff - ->
<!-- - a sibling - ->
the footer -->
```

edited Jun 11 '18 at 21:25



johnny why

748 1 10 34

answered Jan 14 '09 at 12:35



Aaron Digulla

258k 88 494 724

- 3 Does this mean the inner comment is no longer a proper comment? – [S.Lott](#) Jan 14 '09 at 12:58
- 9 Yes, HTML and XML don't allow to nest comments using `<!--`. What you can do in your own code is define a comment *element* and ignore it actively during parsing. – [Aaron Digulla](#) Jan 14 '09 at 14:06
- 1 note that you should replace `--` with `- -` for the inner (nested) comment. – [ebosi](#) Mar 16 '17 at 16:34
- 2 If you change "--" to "- -" then it is no longer a comment. It's not a solution but a way around, you can also use "`<%-- your comment--%>`" for a way around. – [Anant Singh](#) Sep 19 '18 at 10:26

How was this upvoted and accepted as best answer? It doesn't even work! Geesh. Please read [Dave Land's explanation](#) below. – [John E](#) Jan 17 at 14:05



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**TL;DR:** Unfortunately, no, it's not possible (and never will be).

**Short answer:**

An HTML comment is not quite what many think it is. HTML is a form of SGML, in which comments are delimited by pairs of double-dashes (`--` ... `--`).

Thus, any pair of double dashes inside a pair of angle brackets with an exclamation point after the opening bracket (`<!--` ... `-->`) is not a comment.

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This is why comments like this one (which we've *all* likely done one time or another) are a *bad* idea:

```
<!-- ----- HEADER BEGINS HERE ----- -->
```

*Truth: I am too lazy to tell you how many comments are represented by the above tag pollution, but it's at least 10.*

I got less lazy: This so-called "comment" actually consists of 10 comments, three words outside any comment (i.e., just bad SGML), and the beginning of a comment that is not terminated. It's a real mess:

```
<!-- 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5 --
HEADER BEGINS HERE
-- 6 -- 7 -- 8 -- 9 -- 10 -- -->
```

Of course, it's not *quite* that simple, due to differences in how each browser chooses to interpret the spec.

Here's an excellent article that explains it:

<http://weblog.200ok.com.au/2008/01/dashing-into-trouble-why-html-comments.html>

### Long answer: Why we get it wrong

Most of us who grew up with HTML (without delving into the SGML that underlies it) have come to believe that the string `<!--` begins a comment, and the string `-->` ends a comment.

Actually, `<!` and `>` delimit an SGML declaration within your HTML document, such as the DOCTYPE declaration we've all seen at the top of our pages. *Within* an SGML declaration, comments are delimited by double-dashes. Thus, the HTML comment

```
<!-- this is a comment -->
```

which most of us would believe is parsed like this `<!-- this is a comment -->` is actually parsed like this:

```
<!-- this is a comment -->
```

It is an SGML declaration that is empty except for a comment.

Because HTML is a form of SGML, this "comment-within-a-declaration" functions as an HTML comment.

Out of interest, here's a chunk of pure SGML that shows comments functioning as they were intended in SGML: this attribute list

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```

<!ATTLIST LINK
  %attrs;                                -- %coreattrs, %i18n, %events --
  charset    %Charset;    #IMPLIED -- char encoding of linked resource --
  href       %URI;        #IMPLIED -- URI for linked resource --
  hreflang   %LanguageCode; #IMPLIED -- language code --
  type       %ContentType; #IMPLIED -- advisory content type --
  rel        %LinkTypes;   #IMPLIED -- forward link types --
  rev        %LinkTypes;   #IMPLIED -- reverse link types --
  media      %MediaDesc;   #IMPLIED -- for rendering on these media --
>

```

edited Aug 24 '15 at 21:57

answered Aug 24 '12 at 1:26



Dave Land

1,688 14 21

1 Interesting. I wonder if this is still true of html5 parsing. – Kzqai Aug 27 '13 at 17:46

1 Unfortunately, yes, it is still true, because it is part of the underlying SGML underpinnings on which all HTML, including HTML5, is based. It is all but impossible for this to change. – Dave Land Aug 27 '13 at 22:56

It cannot be done. --> will always end an existing HTML comment.

8

edited Dec 29 '16 at 0:29

answered Jan 14 '09 at 12:34



Pang

7,259 16 68 108



Sergio

6,344 10 41 74

4 Other programming languages like LUA allow it. ==[[ and ==[1[ are the start of two separate comment blocks. I see no reason why someday HTML couldn't do the same thing. – john ktejik Nov 7 '14 at 19:28

Use `<template>` tag. The fastest way to block all the comment and other html from showing up.

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&lt;template&gt;

&lt;!-- first paragraph--&gt;

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```
<!-- second paragraph-->
```

Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.

```
</template>
```

```
<!-- third paragraph-->
```

Ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit.

answered May 3 '18 at 12:32



TheHive

1,228 11 20

The `<template>` element can't just be added anywhere. Its parent element has to be either the `<body>` element or [a few select others](#). – John E Jan 17 at 14:09

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If you're really stuck with some piece of HTML – pre-rendered at some uncontrollable source – which contains comments, and you need to make sure none of it is rendered on your page, you can always wrap it with a `<script>` tag like below, only thing is, you can't comment out `<script>` tags this way.

```
<p>some text</p>

<!-- multiline "comment" below using script type="text/html" -->
<script type="text/html">

  <p>commented out html</p>

  <!-- comment 2

    // are nested html comment allowed?

  end of comment 2 -->

<p>more commented out html</p>
```

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[Run code snippet](#)[Expand snippet](#)

If you need to comment out `<script>` tags, you could use a `<textarea>` as wrapper instead, off course doing it this way, you can't comment out `<textarea>` tags.

```
<p>some text</p>

<!-- multiline "comment" below using textarea style="display:none;" -->
<textarea style="display:none;">

    <script>

        alert("which won't show up..");

    </script>

<p>commented out html</p>

<!-- comment 2

    // are nested html comment allowed?

end of comment 2 -->

<p>more commented out html</p>

</textarea>

<p>some more text</p>
```

[Run code snippet](#)[Expand snippet](#)

edited Nov 19 '17 at 10:06

answered May 10 '17 at 20:25

**Mathijs Flietstra**

11.8k 3 31 65

1 Thanks, that's a novel way. Perhaps you could also wrap the thing in JS comment blocks: `/* */` – [Willem](#) Nov 19 '17 at 13:44

---



1



Some editors have commenting/uncommenting commands which can automatically handle existing comments in a block of text. Visual Studio e.g. is doing that when you press Ctrl+KC and Ctrl+KU.

answered Jan 14 '09 at 12:39

[Dirk Vollmar](#)

**144k** 49 234 291

I'm trying what you said for Ctrl+KC & Ctrl+KU for nested html comments in VS2013, but unfortunately it is not handling it. – [Mahdi Alkhatib](#) Sep 3 '15 at 11:52

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I think it isn't allowed, but as far as I know it works in most of the major browsers except in Firefox.

answered Jan 30 '09 at 18:14

[TheHippo](#)

**46.6k** 12 66 94



0



try using this

```
<!--
```

this is the start of the comment

```
<%-- this is another comment --%>
```

```
<%-- this is another one --%>
```

--> end of the comments.

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1,400 2 19 41



11

Try this

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```
<p>some text</p>
<comment> comment 1
<p>commented out html</p>
<!-- comment 2
    // are nested html comment allowed?
end of comment 2 -->
<p>more commented out html</p>
end of comment 1 </comment>
<p>some more text</p>
```

answered Nov 2 '16 at 15:03



txavier

421 4 5

1 Can you explain? I was not aware of a `<comment>` keyword in HTML – Mawg Nov 1 '18 at 7:51

A VS add-in that fakes nested comments by automatically converts `<!--....-->` to `<!--~...~>` then comments out that whole section. It lets you toggle it on and off.

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[nested-comments](#)

answered Apr 24 at 21:12



Paul Gorbis

1,088 13 14