What is PHP?

PHP is a server side scripting language. that is used to develop Static websites or Dynamic websites or Web applications. PHP stands for Hypertext Pre-processor, that earlier stood for Personal Home Pages.

PHP scripts can only be interpreted on a server that has PHP installed.

The client computers accessing the PHP scripts require a web browser only.

A PHP file contains PHP tags and ends with the extension ".php".

What is a Scripting Language?

A script is a set of programming instructions that is interpreted at runtime.

A scripting language is a language that interprets scripts at runtime. Scripts are usually embedded into other software environments.

The purpose of the scripts is usually to enhance the performance or perform routine tasks for an application.

Server side scripts are interpreted on the server while client side scripts are interpreted by the client application.

PHP is a server side script that is interpreted on the server while JavaScript is an example of a client side script that is interpreted by the client browser. Both PHP and JavaScript can be embedded into HTML pages.

Programming Language Vs Scripting Language

Programming language	Scripting language
Has all the features needed to develop complete applications.	Mostly used for routine tasks
The code has to be compiled before it can be executed	The code is usually executed without compiling
Does not need to be embedded into other languages	Is usually embedded into other software environments.

What does PHP stand for?

PHP means - **Personal Home Page**, but it now stands for the recursive backronym PHP: Hypertext Preprocessor.

PHP code may be embedded into HTML code, or it can be used in combination with various web template systems, web content management system and web frameworks.
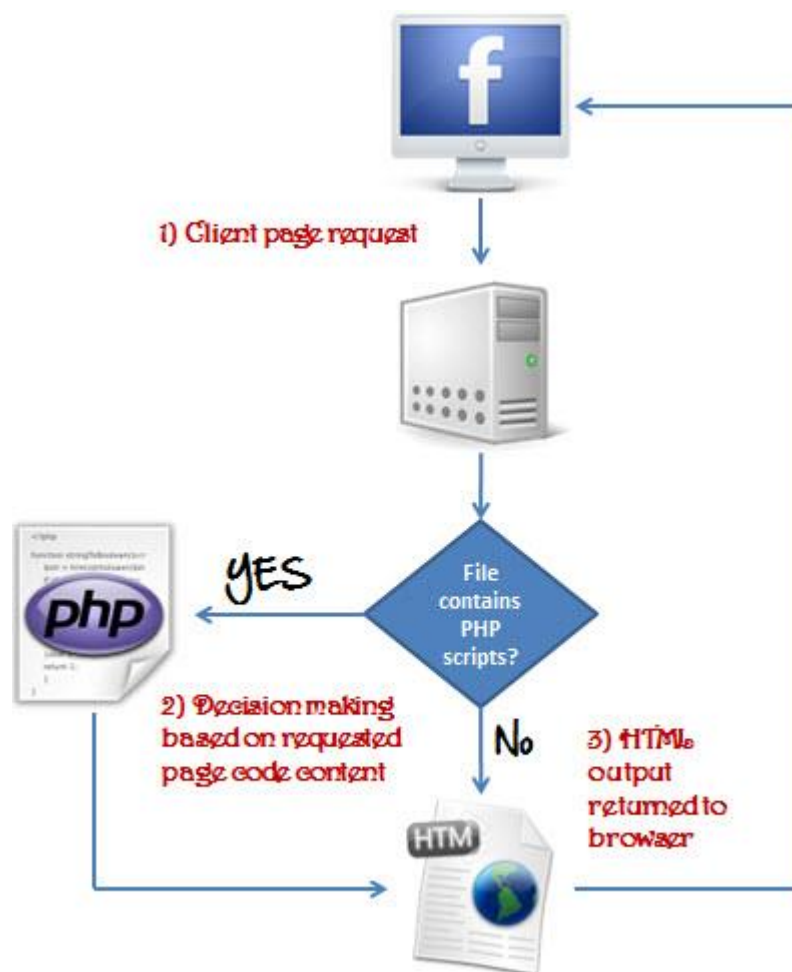
Php Syntax

```
<?php
    echo 'Hello World';
?>
```

A PHP file can also contain tags such as HTML and client side scripts such as JavaScript.

- **HTML is an added advantage** when learning PHP Language. You can even learn PHP without knowing HTML but it's recommended you at least know the basics of HTML.
- **Database management systems** DBMS for database powered applications.
- For more advanced topics such as interactive applications and web services, you will need **JavaScript and XML**.

The flowchart diagram shown below illustrates the basic architecture of a PHP web application and how the server handles the requests.

Why use PHP?

You have obviously heard of a number of programming languages out there; you may be wondering why we would want to use PHP as our poison for the web programming. Below are some of the compelling reasons.
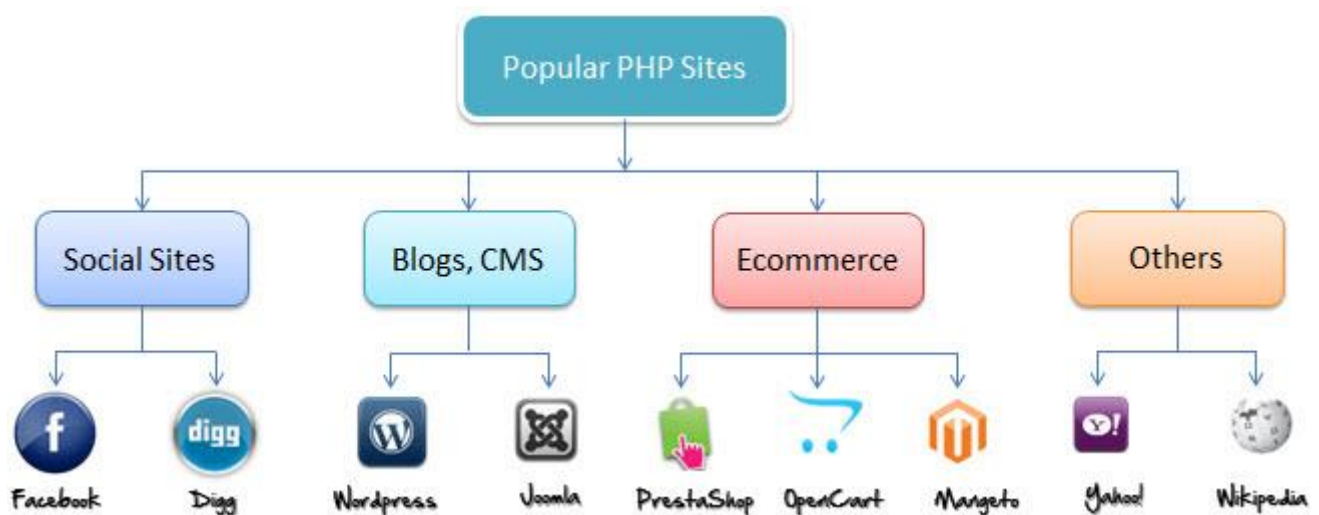
- PHP is **open source and free.**
- Short learning curve compared to other languages such as JSP, ASP etc.
- Large community document
- Most web hosting servers support PHP by default unlike other languages such as ASP that need IIS. This makes PHP a cost effective choice.
- PHP is regular updated to keep abreast with the latest technology trends.
- Other benefit that you get with PHP is that it's a **server side scripting language**; this means you only need to install it on the server and client computers requesting for resources from the server do not need to have PHP installed; only a web browser would be enough.
- PHP has **in built support for working hand in hand with MySQL**; this doesn't mean you can't use PHP with other database management systems. You can still use PHP with
  - Postgres
  - Oracle
  - MS SQL Server
  - ODBC etc.
- PHP is **cross platform;** this means you can deploy your application on a number of different operating systems such as windows, Linux, Mac OS etc.

What is PHP used for & Market share

In terms of market share, there are over 20 million websites and application on the internet developed using PHP scripting language.

This may be attributed to the points raised above;

The diagram below shows some of the popular sites that use PHP

Summary

- PHP stands for Hypertext pre-processor
- PHP is a server side scripting language. This means that it is executed on the server. The client applications do not need to have PHP installed.
- PHP files are saved with the ".php" file extension, and the PHP development code is enclosed in tags.
- PHP is open source and cross platform