

# Chapter 30: Content Languages

## Section 30.1: Base Document Language

It's a good practice to declare the primary language of the document in the `html` element:

```
<html lang="en">
```

If no other `lang` attribute is specified in the document, it means that *everything* (i.e., element content and attribute text values) is in that language.

If the document contains parts in other languages, these parts should get their own `lang` attributes to "overwrite" the language declaration.

## Section 30.2: Element Language

The `lang` attribute is used to specify the language of element content and attribute text values:

```
<p lang="en">The content of this element is in English.</p>
```

```
<p lang="en" title="The value of this attribute is also in English.">The content of this element is in English.</p>
```

The language declaration gets inherited:

```
<div lang="en">
  <p>This element contains English content.</p>
  <p title="This attribute, too.">Same with this element.</p>
</div>
```

## Section 30.3: Elements with Multiple Languages

You can "overwrite" a language declaration:

```
<p lang="en">This English sentence contains the German word <span lang="de">Hallo</span>.</p>
```

## Section 30.4: Regional URLs

It is possible to add the attribute `hreflang` to the elements `<a>` and `<area>` that create hyperlinks. Such it specifies the language of the linked resource. The language defined must be a valid [BCP 47](#)[1] language tag.

```
<p>
  <a href="example.org" hreflang="en">example.org</a> is one of IANA's example domains.
</p>
```

1. ↑ IETF Network Working Group: RFC 5646 [Tags for Identifying Languages](#), IETF, September 2009

## Section 30.5: Handling Attributes with Different Languages

You can "overwrite" a parent element's language declaration by introducing any element apart from `applet`, `base`, `basefont`, `br`, `frame`, `frameset`, `hr`, `iframe`, `meta`, `param`, `script` (of HTML 4.0) with an own `lang` attribute:

```
<p lang="en" title="An English paragraph">  
  <span lang="de" title="A German sentence">Hallo Welt!</span>  
</p>
```