

# HTML

**HTML** (Hyper Text Markup Language)

- Provides **structure** to the text of the document
- Defines data about the text
- Does NOT directly define the appearance
  - Common mistake!
  - You CAN use HTML to make an appearance
    - But it ends up hard to use/change
    - Bad idea to try

# Intro to HTML

Is HTML a language?

- Yes, the "L" in the name is "Language"

I mean, is it a programming language?

- "No", if you ask for vars+read/write+conditional
- "Yes", if you mean a syntax to instruct a computer
- But why are you asking?

Gatekeeping is not good, don't do it

- Programming is breaking down human-size problems to computer-size

# Declaring an HTML document

- HTML has a few different versions
  - Mostly the same
  - But differences do matter!
- All modern HTML has top of document:

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
```

- If omitted, browser uses **quirks mode**
  - Allows weird past behavior to avoid breaking older sites
  - You don't want that on your new site
  - Potential interview question!

# Browser and HTML

- Browser will guess for bad HTML
- MISTAKE to rely on this

Working, but not valid, webpage:

```
hello world
```

Try it in Chrome: File->Open

# HTML Elements

HTML is made up of **elements**

- Starting **tag**
- Content
- Ending tag

tags are wrapped in **angle brackets**

- `< >`
- Ex: `<p>This is a paragraph</p>`

# Starting Tags

- Wrapped in angle brackets
- **type** of tag is in between angle brackets

```
<p>This is a paragraph</p>
```

# Element Contents

Contents can be

- Text
- Other elements
  - NOT "tags" - complete elements
  - Elements can "nest"
  - Elements cannot "overlap"
- Whitespace (spaces, tabs, new lines)
  - All content whitespace "collapses"
    - Renders as a single space

# Rules about Children

Elements as content of another element

- **Child element**
- Can have **descendants**
- Some elements have rules about contents
  - Ex: a "item list" element (`<ul>`, `<ol>`)
    - only "list item" (`<li>`) as children
    - but `<li>` may have any kind of children
  - Ex: a "p" element
    - may not have "block level" descendants



# Nesting Elements

- HTML elements **can** "nest"
- HTML elements **can't** "overlap"
- Elements can contain elements, text, and/or comments (`<!-- a comment -->`)

Valid: `<div><p></p></div>`

Not Valid: `<div><p></div></p>`

# Nesting Element Rules

A handful of elements have additional rules

- Ex: `<p><div></div></p>` not allowed because a "p" element is a "paragraph"
- a "list" element (`<ol>`, `<ul>`, `<dl>`) can only have "list items" (`<li>`)
  - But list item elements can have any children

Do not rely on what LOOKS like it works!

# Closing Tags

- Type wrapped in angle brackets
- Start with a /
- Examples:
  - `</p>`
  - `</ul>`
  - `</li>`

# Self-closing Elements

If an element has no content, it might **self-close**

- Also known as **empty elements** or **void elements**
- No separate opening tag/closing tag
- One tag, has `/` before ending angle bracket
  - Example: `<link/>`
  - Optional in HTML (not required)
  - Is required in JSX (React)
  - Common to always have closing `'/'`
    - Programming is communication

# Some elements seem weird

Example: `<script>` element CAN be empty

- Often is empty
- But is NOT self-closing
  - Because it CAN have contents
- MUST have separate closing tag
  - Even when empty

# Elements define semantics of contents

**Semantic** === Related to meaning

- Not appearance, but meaning

A string of words

- Heading?
- Paragraph?
- Emphasized?
- Text to link elsewhere?

# Humans use visuals to infer the semantics

- But the visuals don't CREATE the semantics
  - The other way around is true
- HTML should define the semantics
  - THEN visuals based on semantics

It isn't a heading because of how it looks

- It looks like a heading because it is defined as a heading

# Why do we care about semantics?

HTML is used in MANY ways

- Desktop browsers
  - of many resolutions
- Mobile browsers
  - of many resolutions
- Read by programs
  - Search engines!
- Assistive Technology
  - Screen Readers
  - Braille interpreters
- Keyboard, mouse, tablets



# Elements are data about content

- Semantic meaning
- Also additional data!
  - URL for a link, image, etc
  - Assistive hints
  - Relationship between elements

Provided by **attributes** on the element

# Attributes on an Element

Attributes are in the starting tag

- Before the closing angle bracket
- Separated by spaces
  - from type and other attributes
- Either a simple word or 'key="value"' text
  - `<input disabled placeholder="Enter Name"/>`
- Order of attributes does not matter
- For this course, with 'key="value"'
  - No spaces around `=`
  - Double quotes (`"`) around value

# Empty Attributes (no value)

- Old advice will tell you to set a value
  - But Internet Explorer is dead
  - Don't follow that old advice!
- Good: `<input disabled />`
- Bad: `<input disabled="true"/>`
  - Why Bad? "false" is same as "true" here!

# Attribute examples

```
<button disabled>Click Me</button>
```

```
<input type="checkbox">
```

```

```

# Special Attribute: id

Every element can have an `id` attribute

- Ex: `<button id="accept">Accept</button>`
- Value MUST be unique on the page
  - Becomes difficult as pages get more complex

The `id` uniquely identifies the element

- Most elements are not given an `id` though
- Only if we need to refer to that exact element
  - And only that element

# Special Attribute: class

- Not related to programming concept "class"
- More like "category"
- Like `id`, identifies elements
- Unlike `id`, does not have to be unique
- An element can have multiple classes
  - Single `class` attribute
  - Assigned a space-separated list of strings
  - Order does not matter
- `<button class="primary good">Accept"</button>`
- `<button class="good primary">Accept"</button>`

# Class names are heavily used in CSS + JS

- Many approaches
  - Different Pros/Cons
  - Worst is to mix them up
- For this course, class names
  - Must be lowercase
    - not MixedCase, not camelCase
  - Hyphenated (kebab-case) or BEM (later)
  - Must describe the element (semantic)
    - NOT the desired appearance
    - Good: `menu`, `active`, `selected`
    - Bad: `left`, `bold`, `small`

# Skeleton of a Page

- Every page must declare `<!DOCTYPE html>`
  - Not HTML, no closing tag
- Every page must have an `<html>` element
  - Everything goes inside this
- The `<html>` element
  - Contains a `<head>` element
    - Contains a `<title>` element
  - Contains a `<body>` element
    - **sibling** of `<head>`
- Anything omitted is assumed
  - Being explicit prevents poor assumptions



# Basic page

```
<!doctype html>
<html>
  <head>
  </head>
  <body>
    Hello World
  </body>
</html>
```

# Indentation

```
<!doctype html>
<html>
  <head>
  </head>
  <body>
    Hello World
  </body>
</html>
```

- Moving to a new line is done for HUMANS
  - Do it when content is multi-line or complex
- We indent when an element isn't closed
  - Signaling to humans (Incl future self)
  - Programming is Communication
- Common mistake!

# Still a few baseline improvements

- Should have a `<title>` in the `<head>`
- Should define the **encoding**
- Should define the language

We can check simple HTML in the W3 Validator

- **<https://validator.w3.org/>**

# Defining the Title

- This is what shows in the browser tab
- Should be concise and informative
- Must be inside `<head>`
- Only one `<title>` per document

```
<!doctype html>
<html>
  <head>
    <title>Cats of the Internet</title>
  </head>
  <body>
  </body>
</html>
```

# What is encoding?

- Computers store binary
- What binary numbers represent which characters?
  - That definition is the "encoding"
  - We have MANY encodings
- These terms overlap a lot,
- HTML5 must use "utf-8"

# Setting the encoding

```
<!doctype html>
<html>
  <head>
    <title>Internet Cats</title>
    <meta charset="utf-8"/>
  </head>
```

- Is set as attribute on `<meta/>`
  - `<meta>` is self-closing element
- Inside `<head>` to set charset
- `<meta>` is used for page-wide things
  - This is all we'll use it for
- This is a "just do it" thing

# Setting the language

- set as `lang` attribute on `<html>`
- uses **country code** based **language tag**
- Examples
  - `en` (English)
  - `en-US` (United State English)
  - `ja` (Japanese)
  - `zh-Hant` (Chinese written using the Traditional Chinese script)
  - `zh-Hans` (Chinese written using the Simplified Chinese script)

# Setting the language in HTML

```
<!doctype html>  
<html lang="en">  
  <head>  
    <meta charset="utf-8"/>  
    <title>Internet Cats</title>  
  </head>  
  <body>  
    </body>  
</html>
```



# Cat list, simple

```
<!doctype html>
<html lang="en">
  <head>
    <meta charset="utf-8"/>
    <title>Internet Cats</title>
  </head>
  <body>
    <ul>
      <li>Grumpy Cat</li>
      <li>Jorts</li>
      <li>Nyan cat</li>
    </ul>
  </body>
</html>
```

# What is UL?

Notice we have a `<ul>` element

- unordered list
- there's an order, it just isn't important
- want to guess what `<ol>` is?

The list is made up of individual **list items** (`<li>`)

Why not have many list items without `<ul>` element?

- how to separate two lists next to each other?

# Semantic HTML

You don't want "just" HTML

- you want "Semantic HTML"

Semantic means "related to meaning"

HTML where the structure is meaningful

- structure is not based on appearance
- structure is not ignored

More on this later, key lesson:

- Pick elements based on what they *mean*
  - not what they *look like*

# So what is all of HTML?

Honestly, I don't remember it all. MDN is a good friend.

**<https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/HTML/Element>**

Core elements:

- html
- head
- body

# Common head elements

- title
- meta
- link
- style, script (more later)

# Elements commonly in the body

- a
- b/strong, i/emphasis
- img
- p
- ol, ul, dl
- h1-h6
- div
- section, article, aside, header
- nav
- table elements
- various form elements (more later)

# Table Elements

Back in the bad old days, tables were used to control the layout of web pages

## **DO NOT USE TABLES FOR LAYOUT**

- Hard to understand
- Hard to change
- Semantically wrong
- a11y problems

Use tables for tables of data

# Linking

The core of the web is actually LINKS

- originally a format to share and crosslink data like scientific papers

Before you can understand links, you have to understand URLs



# Uniform Resource Locator (URL)

A URL is an address (not just web, all of internet)

- what syntax to use (protocol)
- what port to use that on (port)
  - different protocols have default ports
- what computer to talk to (domain)
- what thing to request (path + file)

`http://northeastern.edu/wp-content/uploads/C0E.jpg`

"Hey NEU server, I want `/wp-content/uploads/C0E.jpg`"

# Linking Pages

A link tells the browser to allow navigation to a different web page

```
<a href="http://neu.edu">Go to NEU</a>
```

"a" elements (anchor) have text content and an href attribute (hypertext reference) that says where to go when followed.

Let's create an "About Cats" page as a separate html file, and link to it from our Cat List page

# Cat list, with link

```
<!doctype html>
<html lang="en">
  <head>
    <meta charset="utf-8"/>
    <title>Internet Cats</title>
  </head>
  <body>
    <a href="about.html">About Cats</a>
    <ul>
      <li>Grumpy Cat</li>
      <li>Jorts</li>
      <li>Nyan cat</li>
    </ul>
  </body>
</html>
```

# About Cats, with link

```
<!doctype html>
<html lang="en">
  <head>
    <meta charset="utf-8"/>
    <title>About Cats</title>
  </head>
  <body>
    <a href="cats.html">Internet Cats</a>
    <p>
      This is a site about cats.
      What better way to master the web?
    </p>
  </body>
</html>
```

# Not Fully Qualified

Why were those `href` so short?

We didn't use **fully qualified** urls

- No protocol? Same protocol as current page
- No domain? Same domain as current page
- No path? Same path as current page

Just listing the filename means it links to different files in the same directory (folder)

# Relative vs Absolute

Common to omit protocol + domain

- Easier to develop/move site files

File references can be **relative** or **absolute**

- Relative to current directory
- Absolute based on a **root** directory

The *root* is NOT the filesystem root

- it is the webserver **document root**

Otherwise any file on the computer is requestable

# How to make absolute references

Absolute file references will always begin with `/`

- Sorry Windows users, the Internet is Unix-based

```
<a href="/examplecat.png">See Cat</a>  
<a href="/games/minecraft/data/guide.html">Punch Trees</a>
```

If it isn't absolute, it is relative

```
<a href="about.html">About Us</a>  
<a href="../dogs/why.html">Drool and barks</a>
```

# Where to use URLs/references

Different elements use references differently

- `a` tag uses `href`
- `img` tag uses `src`
- `link` tag uses `href` (e.g. to load CSS)
- `script` tag uses `src` (to load JS)
- Because life is not easy

`src` is for "replaced" elements, `href` to connect to a resource without replacement

- but you often have to look up to know this

```
<a href="https://examplecat.com/cat.png">A cat</a>  

```



# Link Text

The contents of the `<a>` element are the "link text"

- May not be text (html, images)
- For a11y, there SHOULD be some text
- Do not use "Click here to..."
  - Definitely not "click here"
- Do not use the url itself
- Do name the destination

# Summary - HTML Intro

- HTML creates a **structured document**
- Semantic HTML describes structure
  - Not appearance
- Elements are **tags** and **content**
- Elements can **nest** but not overlap
- Elements may have restrict content

# Summary - HTML Attributes

- Elements may have **attributes**
- Attribute order does not matter
- Attributes may have values
  - or may be simple "present"
- **id** is a special attribute
  - Unique to that element
- **class** is a special element
  - space-separated list
  - list order does not matter
  - categories associated with element

# Summary - HTML Page

- `<!doctype html>` declaration
  - Not an element
- `<html>` element
  - `lang` attribute
- `<head>` element
  - contains `<title>` element
  - contains `<meta>` element
    - `charset="utf-8"` attribute
- `<body>` element

# Summary - URLs

- **URL** is an internet address to a resource
- protocol, domain, port, path, query, hashref
- non-**fully qualified URL** takes page as defaults
- often used as `src` or `href` attribute values
  - elements will specify which they use
- a path can be **relative** or **absolute**
  - Absolute path starts with `/`
    - Relative to webserver **document root**
  - Relative path does not start with `/`
    - Relative to current page path
  - url with domain+path is absolute

# Summary - Links

An `<a>` tag takes an `href` attribute

- Creates a link
- Contents are link text
- Browser will **navigate** when following
  - Loads new page from url
  - Previous page is no longer loaded
- Link text should follow a11y tips
  - Name destination (as text)
  - Avoid "click here"
  - Avoid urls