## What does "semantic HTML" really mean?

### Jen Kramer

When you start off learning HTML, I'm sure your instructor has told you that HTML stands for the Hypertext Markup Language. But what does that really mean?

The Hypertext Markup Language, all it is, is a whole bunch of tags that identify the types of content that you have on a webpage. This is a paragraph; that's a list. This is a heading; that's an article. And so forth through your document.

So, unfortunately, if you take a look at the HTTP Archives 2019 report, they will tell you that some of the top tags that you find out there on the internet right now are div, span, paragraph, list item. Yeah. So, in other words, we're building websites with no meaning behind them.

So, semantic HTML, the real root of this is using tags that generally reflect the meaning that you're trying to convey in your website. When you do this well, you'll actually wind up getting a more accessible website right off the bat. And--but it does mean you have to put some thought into "Which tag are you going to use where?" rather than just populating everything with divs and spans and CSS classes. Probably not the best approach to take.