

# HTML Style Guide



indentation · encoding ·  
doctype · validity ·  
semantics · entities · type...

# Google Style Guides

*‘Every major open-source project has its own style guide: a set of conventions (sometimes arbitrary) about how to write code for that project. It is much easier to understand a large codebase when all the code in it is in a consistent style.*

*“Style” covers a lot of ground, from “use camelCase for variable names” to “never use global variables” to “never use exceptions” ....’*

<https://google.github.io/styleguide/>

# Google HTML/CSS Style Guide

## Table of Contents

### [1 Background](#)

### [2 General](#)

[2.1 General Style Rules](#)

[2.2 General Formatting Rules](#)

[2.3 General Meta Rules](#)

### [3 HTML](#)

[3.1 HTML Style Rules](#)

[3.2 HTML Formatting Rules](#)

### [4 CSS](#)

[4.1 CSS Style Rules](#)

[4.2 CSS Formatting Rules](#)

[4.3 CSS Meta Rules](#)

### [Parting Words](#)

```
<ul>
  <li>Fantastic
  <li>Great
</ul>
```

```
.example {
  color: blue;
}
```

# Indentation

Indent by 2 spaces at a time.  
Don't use tabs or mix tabs and spaces for indentation.

```
<ul>  
  <li>Fantastic  
  <li>Great  
</ul>
```

```
.example {  
  color: blue;  
}
```

```
<!-- Not recommended -->  
<A HREF="/" >Home</A>
```

```
<!-- Recommended -->  

```

```
/* Not recommended */  
color: #E5E5E5;
```

```
/* Recommended */  
color: #e5e5e5;
```

## Capitalization

```
<!-- Not recommended -->  
<A HREF="/" />Home</A>
```

```
<!-- Recommended -->  

```

Use only  
lowercase.

```
/* Not recommended */  
color: #E5E5E5;
```

```
/* Recommended */  
color: #e5e5e5;
```

This applies to HTML element names, attributes, attribute values, CSS selectors, properties, and property values (with the exception of strings).

```
<head>
  <!-- Not Recommended-->
  <meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=ISO-8859-1" />
  ...
</head>
```

```
<head>
  <!--Recommended-->
  <meta charset="UTF-8">
  ...
</head>
```



# Encoding

```
<head>
  <!-- Not Recommended-->
  <meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=ISO-8859-1" />
  ...
</head>
```

## Use UTF-8

```
<head>
  <!--Recommended-->
  <meta charset="UTF-8">
  ...
</head>
```

Specify the encoding in HTML templates and documents via `<meta charset="utf-8">`.

Do not specify the encoding of style sheets as these assume UTF-8.

<https://www.w3.org/International/tutorials/tutorial-char-enc/>



## IN A NUTSHELL

Save your pages as UTF-8.

Always declare the encoding of your document. Use the HTTP header if you can.

Always use an in-document declaration too.

```
<meta charset="utf-8"/>
```

You can use `@charset` or HTTP headers to declare the encoding of your style sheet, but you only need to do so if your style sheet contains non-ASCII characters and, for some reason, you can't rely on the encoding of the HTML and the associated style sheet to be the same.

Try to avoid using the byte-order mark in UTF-8, and ensure that your HTML code is saved in Unicode normalization form C (NFC).

Avoid using character escapes, except for invisible or ambiguous characters. And don't use Unicode control characters when you can use markup instead.

```
<!-- Not Recommended-->  
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN"  
    "http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/loose.dtd">  
<head>
```

```
<!--Recommended-->  
<!DOCTYPE html>  
<head>
```

# Document Type

Use HTML5.

```
<!-- Not Recommended-->  
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN"  
    "http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/loose.dtd">  
<head>
```

```
<!--Recommended-->  
<!DOCTYPE html>  
<head>
```

HTML5 (HTML syntax) is preferred for all HTML documents: <!DOCTYPE html>.

```
<!-- Not recommended -->  
<title>Test</title>  
<article>This is only a test.
```

```
<!-- Recommended -->  
<!DOCTYPE html>  
<meta charset="utf-8">  
<title>Test</title>  
<article>This is only a test.</article>
```

## HTML Validity

Use valid  
HTML where  
possible.

```
<!-- Not recommended -->  
<title>Test</title>  
<article>This is only a test.
```

```
<!-- Recommended -->  
<!DOCTYPE html>  
<meta charset="utf-8">  
<title>Test</title>  
<article>This is only a test.</article>
```

Use valid HTML code unless that is not possible due to otherwise unattainable performance goals regarding file size.

Use tools such as the W3C HTML validator to test.

Using valid HTML is a measurable baseline quality attribute that contributes to learning about technical requirements and constraints, and that ensures proper HTML usage.

```
<!-- Not recommended -->
```

```
<div onclick="goToRecommendations();">All recommendations</div>
```

```
<!-- Recommended -->
```

```
<a href="recommendations/">All recommendations</a>
```



# Semantics

Use HTML  
according  
to its  
purpose.

```
<!-- Not recommended -->  
<div onclick="goToRecommendations();">All recommendations</div>
```

```
<!-- Recommended -->  
<a href="recommendations/">All recommendations</a>
```

Use elements for what they have been created for.

For example, use heading elements for headings, <p> elements for paragraphs, <a> elements for anchors, etc.

Using HTML according to its purpose is important for accessibility, reuse, and code efficiency reasons.



`<!-- Not recommended -->`

The currency symbol for the Euro is `&ldquo;&eur;&rdquo;`

`<!-- Recommended -->`

The currency symbol for the Euro is `"€"`.

## Entity References

Do not use  
entity  
references.

**<!-- Not recommended -->**

The currency symbol for the Euro is `&ldquo;&eur;&rdquo;`.

**<!-- Recommended -->**

The currency symbol for the Euro is "€".

There is no need to use entity references like **&mdash;**, **&rdquo;**, or **&#x263a;**, assuming the same encoding (UTF-8) is used for files and editors as well as among teams.

The only exceptions apply to characters with special meaning in HTML (like `<` and `&`) as well as control or “invisible” characters (like no-break spaces).

### 3.1.7 Optional Tags

Omit optional tags (optional).

For file size optimization and scannability purposes, consider omitting optional tags. The [HTML5 specification](#) defines what tags can be omitted.

(This approach may require a grace period to be established as a wider guideline as it's significantly different from what web developers are typically taught. For consistency and simplicity reasons it's best served omitting all optional tags, not just a selection.)

```
<!-- Not recommended -->
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
  <head>
    <title>Spending money, spending bytes</title>
  </head>
  <body>
    <p>Sic.</p>
  </body>
</html>
```

```
<!-- Recommended -->
<!DOCTYPE html>
<title>Saving money, saving bytes</title>
<p>Qed.
```

### 3.1.7 Optional Tags

Omit optional tags (optional).

For file size optimization and scannability purposes, consider omitting optional tags. The [HTML5 specification](#) defines what tags can be omitted.

(This approach may require a grace period to be established as a wider guideline as it's significantly different from what web developers are typically taught. For consistency and simplicity reasons it's best served omitting all optional tags, not just a selection.)

```
<!-- Not recommended -->
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
  <head>
    <title>Spending money, spending bytes</title>
  </head>
  <body>
    <p>Sic.</p>
  </body>
</html>
```

Too Radical

```
<!-- Recommended -->
<!DOCTYPE html>
<title>Saving money, saving bytes</title>
<p>Qed.
```

```
<!-- Not recommended -->  
<link rel="stylesheet" href="https://www.google.com/css/maia.css"  
      type="text/css">
```

```
<!-- Recommended -->  
<link rel="stylesheet" href="https://www.google.com/css/maia.css">
```

```
<!-- Not recommended -->  
<script src="https://www.google.com/js/gweb/analytics/autotrack.js"  
        type="text/javascript"></script>
```

```
<!-- Recommended -->  
<script src="https://www.google.com/js/gweb/analytics/autotrack.js"></script>
```



## type Attributes

Omit type attributes  
for style sheets and  
scripts.

```
<!-- Not recommended -->  
<link rel="stylesheet" href="https://www.google.com/css/maia.css"  
      type="text/css">
```

```
<!-- Recommended -->  
<link rel="stylesheet" href="https://www.google.com/css/maia.css">
```

```
<!-- Not recommended -->  
<script src="https://www.google.com/js/gweb/analytics/autotrack.js"  
        type="text/javascript"></script>
```

```
<!-- Recommended -->  
<script src="https://www.google.com/js/gweb/analytics/autotrack.js"></script>
```

Do not use type attributes for style sheets (unless not using CSS) and scripts (unless not using JavaScript).

Specifying type attributes in these contexts is not necessary as HTML5 implies text/css and text/javascript as defaults.

This can be safely done even for older browsers.

```
<blockquote>
  <p><em>Space</em>, the final frontier.</p>
</blockquote>
```

```
<ul>
  <li>Moe
  <li>Larry
  <li>Curly
</ul>
```

# General Formatting

```
<blockquote>  
  <p><em>Space</em>, the final frontier.</p>  
</blockquote>
```

```
<ul>  
  <li>Moe  
  <li>Larry  
  <li>Curly  
</ul>
```

Use a new line for every block, list, or table element, and indent every such child element.

Independent of the styling of an element (as CSS allows elements to assume a different role per display property), put every block, list, or table element on a new line.



```
<!-- Not recommended -->
```

```
<a class='maia-button maia-button-secondary'>Sign in</a>
```

```
<!-- Recommended -->
```

```
<a class="maia-button maia-button-secondary">Sign in</a>
```

# HTML Quotation Marks

```
<!-- Not recommended -->  
<a class='maia-button maia-button-secondary'>Sign in</a>
```

```
<!-- Recommended -->  
<a class="maia-button maia-button-secondary">Sign in</a>
```

When quoting attributes values, use double quotation marks.

Use double (") rather than single quotation marks (') around attribute values.

```
<!-- Not recommended -->  

```

```
<!-- Recommended -->  

```

# Multimedia Fallback

Provide alternative contents for multimedia.

```
<!-- Not recommended -->  

```

```
<!-- Recommended -->  

```

For images that means use of meaningful alternative text (alt) and for video and audio transcripts and captions, if available.

Providing alternative contents is important for accessibility reasons: A blind user has few cues to tell what an image is about without **alt**

## HTML Style Guide



indentation · encoding ·  
doctype · validity ·  
semantics · entities · type...