Adding Paragraphs and Text Breaks in HTML

In this lesson, we'll look at paragraphs and text breaks in HTML.

> **WE'LL COVER THE FOLLOWING** ⌃
>
> - **Listing 2-9:** Comparing the effects of `<p>` and `<br/>`
> - **Listing 2-10:** Defining style for our paragraphs
> - **Listing 2-11:** Using the `<wbr/>` tag

As you have already learned, when rendering the HTML markup, the browser ignores line breaks in the page's source code. It behaves as if line breaks were single space characters. In many cases, you want to control explicitly where to break lines. HTML provides two tags for this purpose.

The `<p>` markup designates a paragraph. It surrounds the text and other markups that should be rendered as a single paragraph. The `<br/>` markup causes the browser to start a new line.

The HTML page shown in **Listing 2-9** helps you compare the effect of `<p>` and `<br/>`.
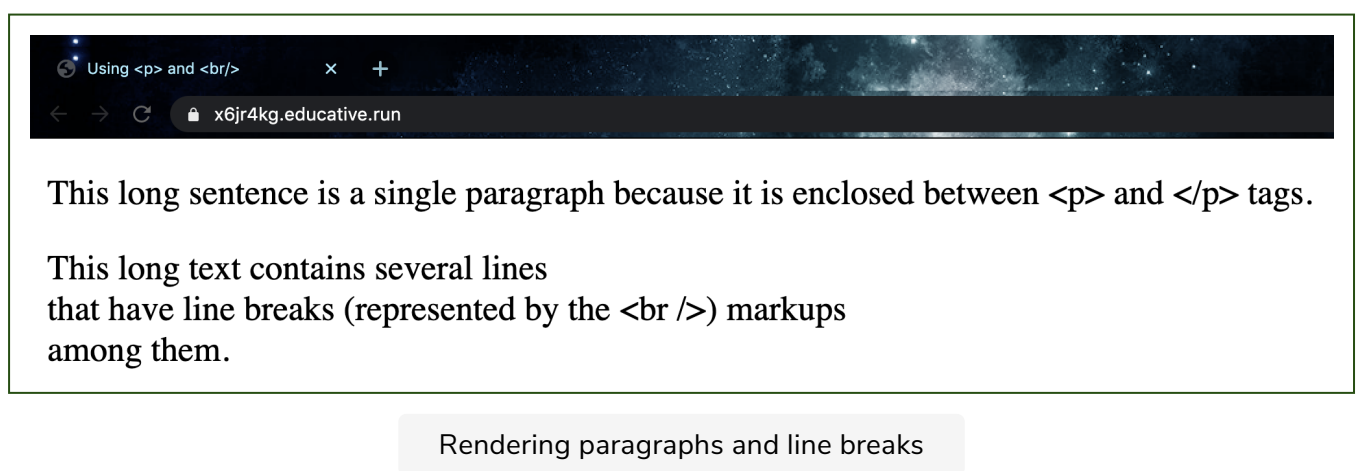
Listing 2-9: Comparing the effects of `<p>` and `<br/>`

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
<head>
    <title>Using &lt;p&gt; and &lt;br/&gt;</title>
</head>
<body>
  <p>
    This long sentence is a single paragraph
    because it is enclosed between &lt;p&gt;
    and &lt;/p&gt; tags.
  </p>
  This long text contains several lines
  <br />
```

```
      that have line breaks (represented by
      the &lt;br /&gt;) markups
      <br/>
      among them.
</body>
</html>
```

The browser calculates the positions where lines should be broken in a paragraph so that the lines fill up the width of the browser window correctly.

The `<br/>` markup is an explicit instruction to break the line, and as you see in Listing 2-9, it can be nested in a paragraph as well. You can look at the rendered page in the image below:

Using <p> and

x6jr4kg.educative.run

This long sentence is a single paragraph because it is enclosed between <p> and </p> tags.

This long text contains several lines
that have line breaks (represented by the <br />) markups
among them.

Rendering paragraphs and line breaks

The image above may suggest that the second text block is an implicit paragraph even if its corresponding markup is not enclosed within `<p>`.

If you intend it to be a paragraph, mark it explicitly so. Otherwise, styles applied to paragraphs won't be applied to this "orphaned" text.

With Listing 2-10 below, you can examine what it means:

Listing 2-10: Defining style for our paragraphs

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
<head>
  <title>
    Using &lt;p&gt; and &lt;br;/&gt; with styles
  </title>
  <style>
    p {
      margin-top: 1em;
      margin-bottom: 2em;
      line-height: 1.8em;
    }
```

```
    </style>
  </head>
  <body>

    <p>
      #1: This long sentence is a single paragraph
      because it is enclosed between &lt;p&gt;
      and &lt;/p&gt; tags.
    </p>
    <p>
      #2: This is another paragraph
    </p>
    #3: This long text contains several lines
    <br />
    that have line breaks (represented by
    the &lt;br /&gt;) markup
    <br/>
    among them.
    <p>
      #4: This is a paragraph with explicit
      <br/>
      line break within.
    </p>
  </body>
</html>
```

The page displays four text blocks, as shown in the figure below. The style
assigned to the `<p>` tag sets the space before and after the paragraph, as well
as the line spacing through `margin-top`, `margin-bottom`, and `line-height`
properties. You can see that the spacing values have been properly applied for
blocks #1, #2, and #4, but not for #3 as this one is not a paragraph, just a block
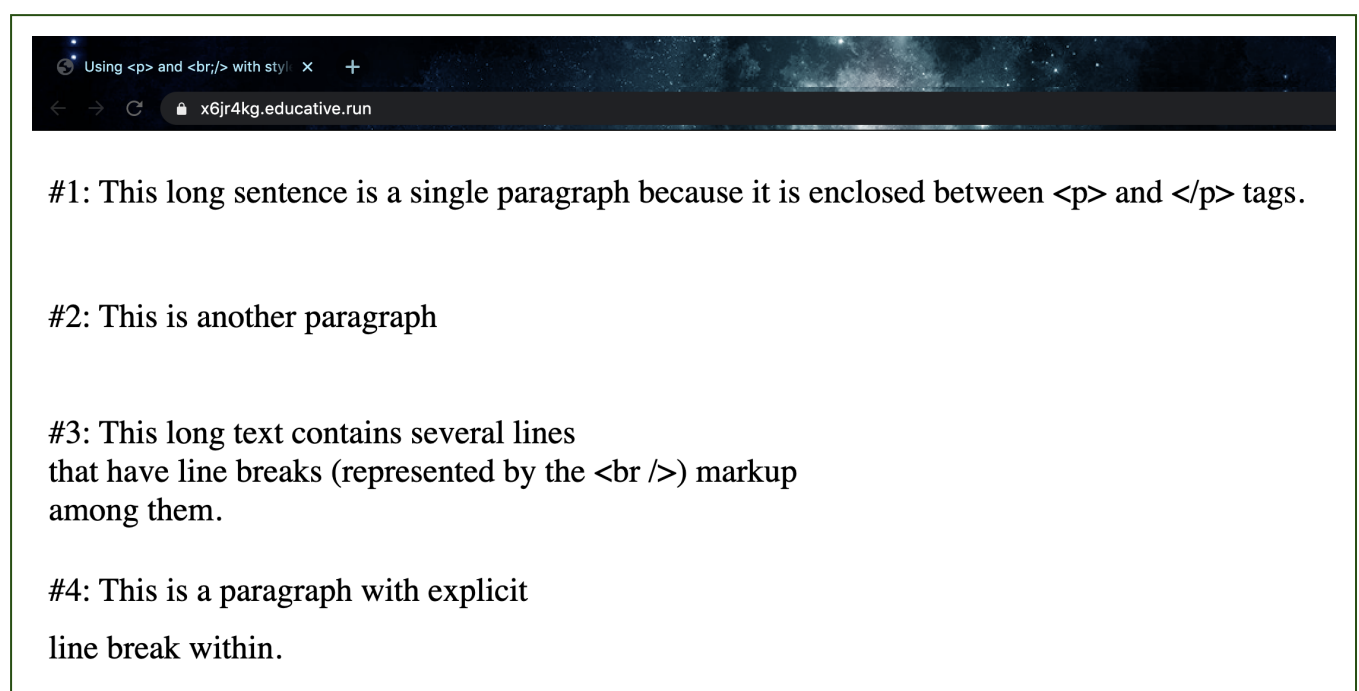of plain text with line breaks.

#1: This long sentence is a single paragraph because it is enclosed between <p> and </p> tags.

#2: This is another paragraph

#3: This long text contains several lines
that have line breaks (represented by the <br />) markup
among them.

#4: This is a paragraph with explicit

line break within.

Block #3 is a non-paragraph

The HTML 5 markup provides a new tag, `<wbr/>`, which specifies a position

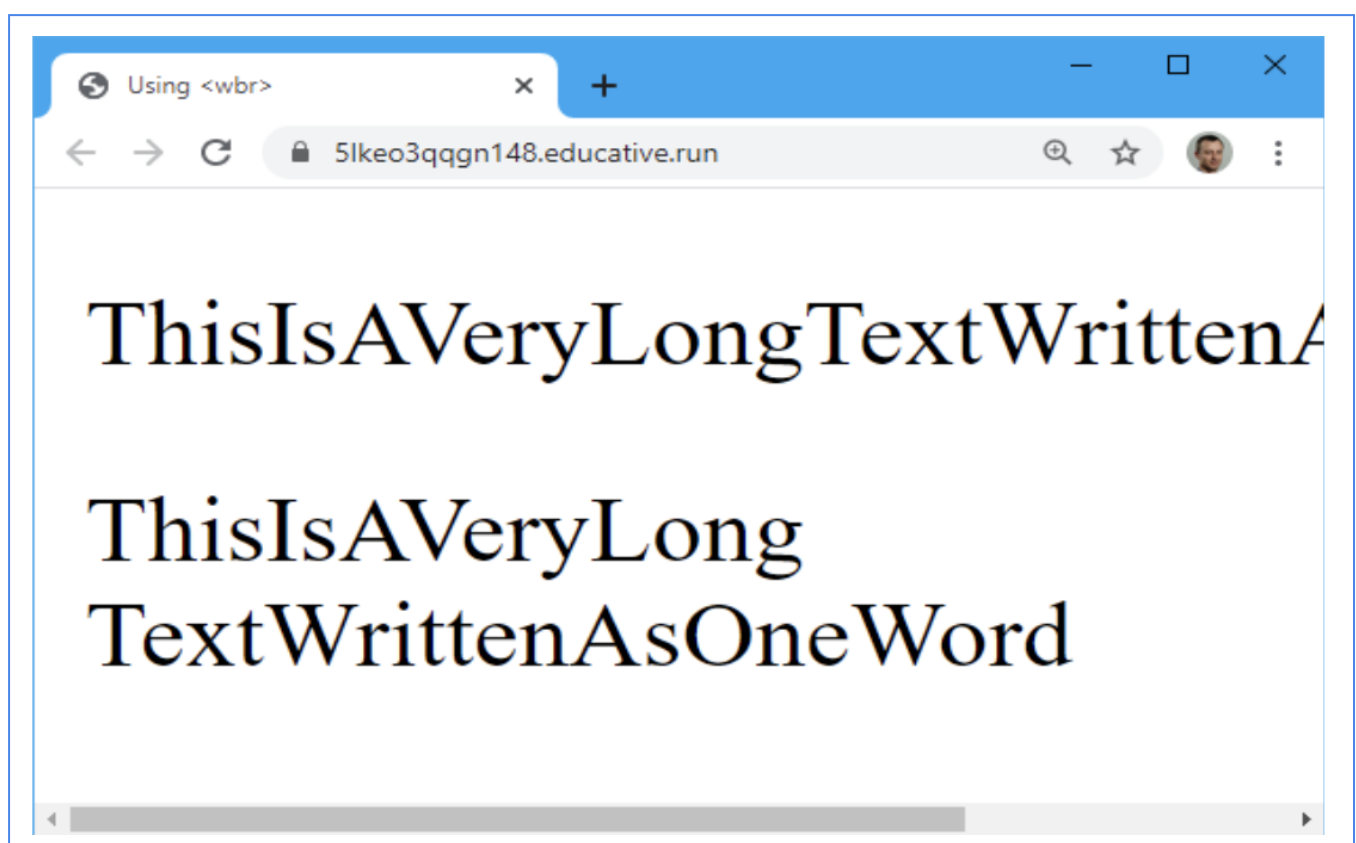The HTML5 markup provides a new tag, `<wbr/>`, which specifies a position where in a text it would be okay to add a line break. This feature is great when you have a long text that could be broken during rendering. Listing 2-11 shows an example of using this tag.

Listing 2-11: Using the `<wbr/>` tag

```html
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
<head>
    <title>Using &lt;wbr&gt;</title>
</head>
<body>
  <p>ThisIsAVeryLongTextWrittenAsOneWord</p>
  <p>ThisIsAVeryLong<wbr />TextWrittenAs<wbr />OneWord</p>
</body>
</html>
```

📄 **NOTE:** Internet Explorer does not support the `<wbr/>` tag.

When this page is displayed in a narrow browser window, as shown in the figure below, the long word without `<wbr/>` is displayed in one line, while the one with `<wbr/>` tags is displayed as expected; the long word is broken at one of the suggested positions.

It is time to learn some new HTML features that pave the way to create more visual, hyperlinked pages in the *next lesson.*