UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
State University of New York

HTML & XHTML Tag Quick Reference

This reference notes some of the most commonly used HTML and XHTML tags. It is not, nor is it intended to be, a comprehensive list of available tags. Details regarding the proper use of XHTML are at the end of this document.

Basic Document Tags	
What It Is	**What It Does**
<html></html>	Indicates the start and end of an HTML Document
<head></head>	Defines the portion of the document that contains essential formatting information. The material in the head is invisible.
<body></body>	Defines the portion of the document that contains the visible information.

Body Attributes	
Not supported in HTML5. Use Cascading Style Sheets.	
What It Is	**What It Does**
<body bgcolor=?>	Specifies the background color *Not supported in HTML5. Use Cascading Style Sheets.*
<body text=?>	Specifies the text color *Not supported in HTML5. Use Cascading Style Sheets.*
<body link=?>	Specifies the color of unfollowed links. *Not supported in HTML5. Use Cascading Style Sheets.*
<body vlink=?>	Specifies the color of followed links. *Not supported in HTML5. Use Cascading Style Sheets.*
<body alink=?>	Specifies the color of links when they are clicked. *Not supported in HTML5. Use Cascading Style Sheets.*
NOTE: Body attributes may be combined within the body tag. Example: <body bgcolor="#FFFFFF" text="#000000" link="#0000CC" vlink="#33CC00" alink="#FF0000"> *Not supported in HTML5. Use Cascading Style Sheets.*	

Text Tags	
What It Is	**What It Does**
<hl></hl>, , , , ,	The heading tags indicate the importance of a heading ranging from the most important, h1, to the least important, h6. These specifications are intended to denote the importance data below the heading.
<tt></tt>	Specifies a typewriter or teletype-like text.
	Creates an emphasis on text that is rendered usually as italics, but sometimes as bold depending on the browser.
	Creates an emphasis on text that is usually rendered as bold, but sometimes as italics depending on the browser.
	Specifies the font size from 1 to 7. 1 is the smallest, 7 the largest, and 3 is generally the default size. *The font tag is not supported in HTML5. Use Cascading Style Sheets.*
	Specifies font color. *The font tag is not supported in HTML5. Use Cascading Style Sheets.*
NOTE: Font attributes may be combined within the font tag. Example: <font size="4"	**NOTE:** The font tag is not supported in HTML5. Use Cascading Style Sheets.

This and other free handouts are available on our Web site.

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
State University of New York

color="#33FF00">Example of combined font attributes. 	

Common Formatting Tags		
What It Is **(HTML 4.0 & Earlier)**	**What It Is** **(XHTML & HTML5)**	**What It Does**
	Same	Defines a paragraph.
<p align=?>	Same	Defines paragraph alignment left, right, or center.
 	Same	Inserts a line break.
<blockquote></blockquote>	Same	Defines a block quote and indents text from both sides. Usually with some extra space above and below.
	Same	Defines the beginning and end of an ordered list.
	Same	Defines the beginning and end of an unordered list.
	Same	Defines the beginning and end of a line within a list. Start a line with a number in an ordered list, and with a bullet in an unordered list.

Image Tags		
What It Is (HTML)	**What It Is (XHTML)**	**What It Does**
<img src="name">		Places and image.
<img src="name" align=?>		Specifies the alignment of an image; left, right, center; bottom, top, middle
<img src="name" border=?>		Specifies a border around and image.
<img src"=name" alt="name">		Specifies the alternative label for an image. This is especially important for use nongraphical browsers.

NOTE: Attributes within the img tag may be combined.

Example in HTML:
<img src="images/fisherman.jpg" width="209" height="214" alt="Our Founder">

Example in XHTML:

Horizontal Rule Tags		
What It Is (HTML)	**What It Is (XHTML)**	**What It Does**
<hr>	<hr />	Specifies the start of a horizontal rule.
<hr size=?>	<hr size=? />	Specifies the height of a horizontal rule.
<hr noshade>	<hr noshade />	States that the horizontal rule should have no shade.

NOTE: Attributes within the horizontal rule tag may be combined.

Example in HTML: <hr noshade width="75%" size="4">

Example in XHTML: <hr noshade width="75%" size="4" />

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
State University of New York

Table Tags	
What It Is	**What It Does**
<table></table>	Specifies the beginning and end of a table.
<tr></tr>	Specifies the beginning and end of a table row.
<td></td>	Specifies the beginning and end of a table cell.
<th></th>	Defines a table header. A normal cell with text that is bold and centered.
<table border=#>	Specifies the size of the border around a table and cells within the table.
<table cellspacing=#>	Specifies the space between cells.
<table cellpadding=#>	Specifies the amount of space between the border of a cell and the items within the cell.
<table width="?">	Specifies the width of a table in either pixels or percent.
<tr align=?>	Specifies the alignment of contents in a row of cells as either left, right, or center.
<td align=?>	Specifies the alignment of contents in a cell as either left, right, or center.
<tr valign=?>	Specifies the vertical alignment of contents in a row of cells as either top, bottom, or middle.
<td valign=?>	Specifies the vertical alignment of contents in cell as either top, bottom, or middle.
<td colspan=#>	Specifies the number of columns a cell will span.
<td rowspan=#>	Specifies the number of rows a cell will span.
<td nowrap>	Stops text from automatically line wrapping.

XHTML can be thought of as an upgraded and stricter version of HTML 4.01, while HTML 5 is an expansion and clarification of the markup language for the Web. Neither XHTML nor HTML 5 is particularly difficult to write. However, there are some important techniques to writing properly formed code. There are some simple rules that must be followed. The most important rules are:

- Tags must all be in lower case.
- Elements must be nested correctly.
- Tag elements must be closed.
- Documents must be well-formed

Examples of lower case rule:

<STRONG>This is incorrect.</STRONG>

This is correct.

Examples of the nesting rule:

      This is incorrect nesting.

      This is correct nesting.

Examples of the closed tag rule:

This horizontal rule tag is not closed- <hr>

This horizontal rule tag is closed- <hr />

This image tag is not closed- <img source="/images/picture.jpg" alt="Cows in a pasture">

This image tag is properly closed-

Examples of the well-formed document rule:

XHTML documents must have the proper structure. This means all components must be within the opening and closing HTML tags, <html></html>. Internal elements must be correctly nested and located properly. The basic components and structure of an XHTML document are-

```
<html>
   <head>
   </head>
   <body>
   </body>
</html>
```

XHTML/HTML 5 Syntax Rules

XHTML and HTML 5 require that some basic rules of syntax be followed. As with the tag rules noted above, XHTML and HTML 5 syntax is not much more difficult that correctly formed HTML 4.0. These rules are, however, much stricter and must not be violated. These rules follow.

- Attributes must be quoted.
- The Name attribute is replaced by the ID attribute
- Attribute shorthand must not be used.
- DOCTYPE statement must be used. (The DOCTYPE statement is part of Document Type Definition, DTD, and is used to specify which syntax is used in the Web page.)

Examples of the quoted attribute rule:

This is incorrect- <table width=75% bgcolor=ff0000>

This is correct- <table width-"75" bgcolor="ff0000">

Examples of the Name attribute replacement rule:

This is incorrect-

This is the correct substitution-

Examples of the no shorthand rule:

This is an example of improper shorthand- <input checked>

This is the same tag correctly written without shorthand- <input checked="checked"

Examples of DOCTYPE statements:

Invalid "old-style" DOCTYPE statement:

```
<html>
  <head>
    <title>This is a page without a statement</title>
  </head>
  <body>
  </body>
</html>
```

XHTML DOCTYPE statement:

```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Strict//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-strict.dtd">
<html>
  <head>
    <title>Example of a page with a DOCTYPE statement</title>
  </head>
  <body>
  </body>
</html>
```

HTML 5 DOCTYPE statement:

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML>
<html>
    <head>
      <title>Example of a page with a DOCTYPE statement</title>
    </head>
    <body>
    </body>
  </html>
```

Note that the DOCTYPE statement goes ahead of the opening HTML tag, <html>. The statement is not part of the HTML document and does not have a closing tag. It is used to tell a browser how to render the document. There are three XHTML DOCTYPE statements.

Statement used to create clutter-free pages that must follow rules exactly when Cascading Style Sheets are used:

```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Strict//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-strict.dtd">
```

Statement used when HTML presentational features are present and when it is desirable to support older browsers that do not fully understand Cascading Style Sheets:

```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">
```

Statement used when frames are incorporated into the design of the page (*note that frames are an obsolete design technique and are not used in modern page designs*):

```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Frameset//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-frameset.dtd">
```

HTML5 has only the one DOCTYPE statement noted above.

About HTML 5

At the time of this writing, HTML 5 remains in a non-official state. Many Web page builders are starting to incorporate elements of HTML 5 into their projects. All current browsers support some HTML 5 components, but no browser supports everything outlined in the HTML 5 rules. One primary reason for this is that the HTML 5 rules are being constantly updated as problems are worked out.

HTML 5 has many new tags. It is necessary to understand that the purpose of HTML is to specify what something is. For instance, HTML identifies a page element as a link, a list, a paragraph, or some other sort of object. Presentation is controlled by Cascading Style Sheets. In other words, HTML specifies that an object is, for instance, a link, but not what color the link is.

HTML 5 expands the list of tags by providing more options for identification. It is now possible to identify headers, footers, sections, audio, video, and much more. The expansion of HTML tags and the ability of browsers to understand these new tags will improve the usability of the World Wide Web and result in new methods of presentation with better results. It also means that we can expect less variation in the appearance and operation of Web pages when viewed with different browsers and operating systems.