

Basic Markup Tags

Title

Every HTML document should have a title. A title is generally displayed separately from the document and is used primarily for document identification in other contexts (e.g., a WAIS search). Choose about half a dozen words that describe the document's purpose.

In the X Window System and Microsoft Windows versions of NCSA Mosaic, the Document Title field is at the top of the screen just below the pulldown menus.

In NCSA Mosaic for Macintosh, text tagged as `<TITLE>` appears as the window title.

Headings

HTML has six levels of headings, numbered 1 through 6, with 1 being the most prominent. Headings are displayed in larger and/or bolder fonts than normal body text. The first heading in each document should be tagged `<H1>`. The syntax of the heading tag is:

```
<Hy>Text of heading</Hy>
```

where _y is a number between 1 and 6 specifying the level of the heading.

For example, the coding for the "Headings" section heading above is

```
<H3>Headings</H3>
```

Title versus first heading

In many documents, the first heading is identical to the title. For multipart documents, the text of the first heading should be suitable for a reader who is already browsing related information (e.g., a chapter title), while the title tag should identify the document in a wider context (e.g., include both the book title and the chapter title, although this can sometimes become overly long).

Paragraphs

Unlike documents in most word processors, carriage returns in HTML files aren't significant. Word wrapping can occur at any point in your source file, and multiple spaces are collapsed into a single space. (There are couple of exceptions; space following a `<P>` or `<Hy>` tag, for example, is ignored.) Notice that in the bare-bones example, the first paragraph is coded as

```
Welcome to HTML.  
This is the first paragraph.<P>
```

In the source file, there is a line break between the sentences. A Web browser ignores this line break and starts a new paragraph only when it reaches a `<P>` tag.

Important: You must separate paragraphs with `<P>`. The browser ignores any indentations or blank lines in the source text. HTML relies almost entirely on the tags for formatting instructions, and without the `<P>` tags, the document becomes one large paragraph. (The exception is text tagged as "preformatted," which is explained below.) For instance, the following would produce identical output as the first bare-bones HTML example:

```
<TITLE>The simplest HTML example</TITLE><H1>This is a level  
one heading</H1>Welcome to the world of HTML. This is one  
paragraph.<P>And this is a second.<P>
```

However, to preserve readability in HTML files, headings should be on separate lines, and paragraphs should be separated by blank lines (in addition to the `<P>` tags).

NCSA Mosaic handles `<P>` by ending the current paragraph and inserting a blank line.

In HTML+, a successor to HTML currently in development, `<P>` becomes a "container" of text, just as the text of a level-one heading is "contained" within `<H1>...</H1>`:

```
<P>  
This is a paragraph in HTML+.  
</P>
```

The difference is that the `</P>` closing tag can always be omitted. (That is, if a browser sees a `<P>`, it knows that there must be an implied `</P>` to end the previous paragraph.) In other words, in HTML+, `<P>` is a beginning-of-paragraph marker.

The advantage of this change is that you will be able to specify formatting options for a paragraph. For example, in HTML+, you will be able to center a paragraph by coding

```
<P ALIGN=CENTER>  
This is a centered paragraph. This is HTML+, so you can't do it yet.
```

This change won't effect any documents you write now, and they will continue to look just the same with HTML+ browsers.

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