

# What the HTML is this?

It's just a game of <tags>!

HTML means HyperText Markup Language. It's what Elizabeth Castro in *HTML for the World Wide Web* (p. 12) calls "Esperanto for computers." It's a common language that computers can use to understand how pages are written for web browsers. HTML is not programming. The programmers at the CERN Laboratories in Switzerland programmed it for the world to use. The rest of us might use it as we would a very simple language with letter combinations that direct a browser to display your text and images in a certain way.



HTML tags are markers. Markers are text enclosed within the less than and the greater than signs <title> and they give simple instructions. For example, look down this page a little and notice the HTML code in red. If Netscape or Internet Explorer opens that code, a web page entitled "This is a Web Page" would open. You would see the title in the browser title bar location, text would follow as lines and in a short bulleted list. There would also be an image of The Thinker centered on the page with text following it aligned in the middle to the right. In addition, there would be a URL that links to my virtual classroom bulletin boards.

```
<html>
<head>
<title>This is a web page.</TITLE>
</HEAD>
<BODY>
This first page is dull so far.
```



```
<p>Let's make a list.  
<p>  
<ul>  
<li>This is one item.  
<li>This is another item.  
</ul>  
<font size ="+3">This is bigger than the last.  
</font>  
<p><a href="bulletinboards.html"> Classroom Bulletin Boards </a>  
<br>This is my classroom bulletin board web page.  
<center>  
<p>This is a picture of the Thinker.  
</center>  
</BODY>  
</HTML>
```

To build a web page in HTML code, begin with the <html> tag and end with the </html> tag. The very last instruction in an HTML document is the </html> tag. The slash indicates an end to that particular instruction. Everything between the <html> and </html> tags is in HTML code.

Let's try it. Open SimpleText (Mac) or Note Pad (PC). We use an unsophisticated word processor for this task simply because when we work in code, we supply the formatting. Learning a little code will allow us to appreciate the real power of web authoring programs such as Netscape Composer, PageMill, FrontPage and Dreamweaver. More importantly, learning code will allow us to go to the source and examine the HTML code when we get in trouble using an authoring program or when we want to see how other people built a web page. Type the code you see below.

```
<html>
<head>
<title>My HTML Web Page</title>
</head>
<body>
This first web page really is dull.
What can we add to it?
</body>
</html>
```



Save this file as webpage.htm in your Web Site folder and open it by following the instructions below. It is important to note that you must save HTML documents as text documents. In Windows Note Pad, these documents are followed by the .txt extension. Make sure the .txt extension is replaced by the .htm extension. With Macintosh SimpleText everything you save is simply text (Go figure) but you still need to add the extension .htm.

Open Navigator or Explorer. Select “File” => “Open” => “Page in Navigator...” (Command O), or “File” => “Open” in Explorer (Control O) and browse to the file you just saved.

Pretty boring, eh? Now let’s spruce it up a bit. We go into the **Edit, Save and Browse** routine. Whenever we do something in HTML code, it’s a good idea to save it immediately and then check it in the browser. If the browser (Netscape or Explorer) is still open, simply click on reload or refresh. Enter the new code below or simply add to what you already have.

```
<html>
<head>
<title>My HTML Web Page</title>
</head>
<body>
This first web page really is dull.
<p>What can we add to it?
<p>I've got an idea. Let's make the text bold or italic. <i> This is
italic</i> and <b> this is bold.</b>
<p><h1>We can make a heading big</h1> or <h6>small.</h6>
<p>H3 is the standard default size.
<p>We can change the size of an individual <font size="+3">word
</font> with the font tag.
</body>
</html>
```

These are the things we added. We used the `<p>` tag. It's one of the few tags that does not need an end tag `</p>` but you can put one in if you like. Most people don't. We used the heading tags: `<h1>` is the biggest heading and `<h6>` is the smallest. We also used the `<font size="+3">` tag which is turned off with `</font>`. The number in quotes can be anywhere from -1 to +6 depending on what the current font size happens to be.

Save these additions and browse again. Now that you've had a taste of Tagology 101, check out the sections in red at the beginning of this document. Try some of the tags for images and links. Remember this: When adding images, your images should be in the same folder as your HTML document. If you know the URL (link) to a site, enter it like this for example:

```
<a href="http://www.csus.edu/indiv/m/mcvickerb/toolsforthought.htm">
Tools for Thought</a>
```

If you like this code stuff - and there are many who do - you can learn all about it from references that you can pick up on the web or in your nearest brick and mortar bookstore. *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Creating an HTML Web Page* is my favorite. It's by Paul Mcfedres. You can visit his website at the URL that follows.

<http://www.mcfedries.com/books/cightml/>