

All elements are sorted within their groups in prioritized order. Recommended (X)HTML versions are mint-colored.

| Element | HTML 3.2 | HTML 4.01 strict | HTML 4.01 transitional | XHTML 1.0 frameset | XHTML 1.0 strict | XHTML 1.0 transitional | XHTML 1.0 frameset | XHTML 1.1 | XHTML 1.1 Basic | (X)HTML 2.0 | (X)HTML 5.0 | /B/lock/ /p/line/ /T/able | /I/h/visible/ /N/ormal/ /R/eplaced | Semantic meaning | Usability & Accessibility | Best practice | SEO notes | Notable browser issues | Unstyled appearance | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---|---|-----------|---|--|--|
| Standards | Information | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Document structure | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <html> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | B | N | | | | | | | |
| <head> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | I | | | | | | | |
| <body> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | B | N | The main content | | | | | Margin: 8px; | |
| <title> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | I | The documents title or name | Make unique for every page | | | Highly ranked and will be the link-text | Text on the title-bar | |
| <meta> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | I | | | | | Only "name = 'description'" is useful | | |
| <link> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | I | Indicates explicit relationship between this document and other resources. As such there are many good uses! | | | | | | |
| <style> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | I | | | External style sheets are usually best | | | | |
| <script> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | I | Unobtrusive DOM-scripts, please! | Keep scripts external | | | Test for capabilities, not browsers! | Script may have output | |
| <noscript> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | • | I* | I | | | Unnecessary with unobtrusive scripting techniques! Forbidden in XHTML 5. | | | Not ignored by true XML parsers! | | |
| <base> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | I | | | | | Ignored by MSIE for scripts | | |
| <basefont> | ✓ | | ☐ | ☐ | | | | | | | | | I | | | Use CSS | | | | |
| Non element markup constructs | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <?xml ?> | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | • | | I | XML declaration | Better skip. It will put MSIE <= 6 in quirks mode and is NOT obligatory. In theory best place to specify encoding for offline usage of an XHTML document. | | | | | |
| <!DOCTYPE> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | I | What flavour of (X)HTML is used? | | Required in every version since HTML 2.0! | | | Will control standards compliance or quirks mode | |
| <!-- --> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | I | Code comment | | Use richly while learning and developing | | | MSIE has conditional comments | |
| <![CDATA[]> | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | • | | I | Unparsed character data | | Use for inline JavaScript in XHTML | | | Opera may ignore CSS if MIME is true XHTML | |

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| Basic semantics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <h1> to <h6> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | B | N | Heading | Use in correct order | | Highly ranked | | Large bold text, gradually smaller. Margin-top/bottom |
| <hgroup> | | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | B | N | The hgroup element represents the heading of a section. The element is used to group a set of h1–h6 elements when the heading has multiple levels, such as subheadings, alternative titles, or taglines. | | | | |
| <p> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | B | N | Paragraph | | | | | Margin-top: 1em; |
| | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | Emphasized text | Usually spoken louder | Do not equate with "italics" | Emphasised words may get higher ranking. | | Italics |
| | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | Strongly emphasised text | Usually spoken really loud! | Do not equate with "bold" | | | Bolder |
| <abbr> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | Abbreviation | "All acronyms are abbreviations". Make sure they are not confused with links. CSS-speech: Spell out initialisms. | | Not in MSIE | abbr[title], acronym[title] { border-bottom: dotted 1px; } | |
| <acronym> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | I | N | Acronym | | | | | |
| <blockquote> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | B | N | Longer quote | | Do not equate with "indentation" | | Indented right and left. | |
| <q> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | Short quote | | | No quotation marks in MSIE | Quotation marks | |
| <cite> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | Who is cited | | Not the quote as such | | Italics | |
| <ins> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | I* | N | Inserted text | Better turn underlining off | | | Underlined | |
| | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | I* | N | Deleted text | | | | Strike through | |
| <dfn> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | Defined word | | | | Italics | |
| <h> | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | B | N | Heading | | Use with "section" | | Probably like h1, h2, etc. | |
| <mark> | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | I | N | Marked or highlighted text | | In future, use to highlight matches to search string | | | |
| Hypertext | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <a> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | Link | Link text should be understandable out of context. May contain block elements in (X)HTML 5. | Any element with an id can replace its use as "anchor" | rel="nofollow" means it will not increase targets page rank. rel="canonical" marks the preferred URL for a resource. | | Blue underlined text. Images get a blue border. |

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| Page structure | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <div> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | B | N | Part of page | Is a semantic element available? If so, use that instead. | Avoid "divitis" Avoid "spanmania" | | | | | | |
| | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | | | | | | | | | |
| <pre> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | B | N | | | | | May override "width" in MSIE | Preformatted | | | |
| <hr> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | B | R | Thematic break | | Do not use for visual purposes only. | | Color' for MSIE, 'background-color' for Gecko | A bar | | | |
| <address> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | B | N | Contact information | Always use hCard for addresses, but in combination with <address> for contact info. | | | | Italics | | | |
| <section> | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | B | R | Document or application section | Section takes priority over h1-h6 | Does not equal <div> | | | | | | |
| <article> | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | B | N | Stand alone capable section | | | | | | | | |
| <aside> | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | B | N | "tangentially related to the content" | | | | | | | | |
| <header> | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | B | N | The header element represents a group of introductory or navigational aids. A header element typically contains the section's heading (an h1–h6 element or an hgroup element), but can also contain other content, such as a table of contents, a search form, or any relevant logos. | | Today: Good values for id or class attributes! | | | | | | |
| <footer> | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | B | N | Footer for a section | | | | | | | | |
| <figure> | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | B | R | Paragraph with a caption | Caption will probably be mandated. Content may be a image. | Proposed replacement for misuse of 'fieldset' | | | | | | |
| <headings> | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | | | Set a heading | | | | | | | | |
| <listing> | ☐ | | | | | | | | | | | B | | | | | | | | (Parsed as CDATA, preserved whitespace) | | |
| <xmp> | ☐ | | | | | | | | | | | B | | | | | | | | | | |

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| Visual formatting | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | (Line break) | | | | | | Line break | |
| | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | | | May be only option for a WYSIWYG editor | | May get a slightly elevated rank | | Bolder | |
| <i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | | | | | | | Italics | |
| <sub> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | | | | | | | Subscript | |
| <sup> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | | E.g. Use with simple math, footnotes, and when part of language idiom. | | | | | Superscript | |
| <big> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | | | | | | | Bigger | |
| <small> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | | | | | | | Smaller | |
| <tt> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | | | | | | | Fixed width font | |
| <center> | | | ☞ | ☞ | | ☞ | ☞ | | | | B | N | | | | Use CSS | | | Centers everything! | |
| | ✓ | | ☞ | ☞ | | ☞ | ☞ | | | ♦ | I | N | | | | | | | Changes font settings | |
| <u> | ✓ | | ☞ | ☞ | | ☞ | ☞ | | | | I | N | | Avoid underlining always (even with CSS), since it will look like a link. | | | | | Underlined | |
| <s> | | | ☞ | ☞ | | ☞ | ☞ | | | | I | N | | | | | | | Strike through | |
| <strike> | ✓ | | ☞ | ☞ | | ☞ | ☞ | | | | I | N | | | | Use CSS or | | | | |
| <nobr> | | | | | | | | | | | I | N | | | | Use CSS instead | | NS 4 proprietary, but works in all | No line breaks in cell | |
| <wbr> | | | | | | | | | | | I | N | | | | | | MSIE proprietary | Suggestion for line break. | |

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|---------|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|-------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| Tables | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| <table> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | T | N | Tabular data | Describe format with "summary" | Not for layout | | | Visible borders |
| <tr> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | T | N | Table row | | | | | |
| <th> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | T | N | Heading for row or column | Use "scope" or "headers/id" | | | | Table cell with bold, centered text |
| <td> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | T | N | Table data | | | | | A table cell |
| <caption> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | T | N | Table caption | Often a good idea to have | | | Hard to style | Centered above the table |
| <thead> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | T | N | Table head | | Can be used instead of grouping <tr> with the class attribute | | Repeats on each page when printing | |
| <tbody> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | T | N | Table body | | | MSIE needs this one for dynamically created tables | | |
| <tfoot> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | T | N | Table footer | | | | | |
| <col> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | T | I | Table column | | | | MSIE catches too many style-rules! Safari does not support colgroup | |
| <colgroup> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | T | I | Group of columns | | | | | |

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| Forms (& application-type elements) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <form> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | B | N | A form | Do not emulate links | Normally use the POST method | Spiders do not 'follow' forms | | | | |
| <input> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | R | Input widget | | | | | | Input widget | |
| <label> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | Explanation for form-controls | (Almost) every form control should have a label. Significant increase of clickable area for checkboxes and radio buttons. Tip: add CSS-rule "cursor: pointer;" | | | | | | |
| <textarea> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | R | Enter text | | | | | | Textarea widget | |
| <button> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | R | Flexible button | JS for progressive enhancement | | | | | Button widget | |
| <fieldset> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | B | N | Group of form-elements | Logical groups of form controls increase usability | | | | | Border, maybe rounded corners | |
| <legend> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | B | N | Heading for group of form elements | It might be repeated for each control in speech synthesis. | | | | | Text in the top border | |
| <select> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | R | Multiple choice input | Multiple selects are confusing | | | Menus done with select widgets will not be followed by spiders | | Drop down list | |
| <option> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | R | | | | | | | Item in such list | |
| <optgroup> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | R | | | Used sensibly they help | | | | | Group of such items |
| <isindex> | ✓ | | ☐ | ☐ | | ☐ | ☐ | | | | B | R | (Expands to <form> containing <input>) | | Precursor of form | | | | "This is a searchable index." + A textfield between two <hr> | |

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| Web applications | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <command> | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | I | R | A command the user can invoke | | | | No browser support this yet (2008-08-04) | Button, radiobutton or checkbox | |
| <datalist> | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | I | A list of suggested values for a form control. Use with <option>. | | | | | | |
| <output> | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | I | | "Advisory or transient information..." (D. Goodman) "Considered to be a form control for the purposes of the DOM" (Spec) | | | | Opera 9 is the first browser to support these, but that support is only preliminary. Most functionality can be implemented through JavaScript. | Unstyled text | |
| <details> | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | B | N | Additional information or controls which the user can obtain on demand | | | | | | |
| <menu> | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | B | N | List of commands. Returns in (X)HTML 5, with a wider usage than pure navigation. | | | | | Like | |
| <meter> | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | I | R/N | A scalar measurement within a known range. | | | | | | |
| <progress> | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | I | R/N | A progress bar. (Do not confuse with <meter>) | | | | | Not decided as of Jan -07 | |
| <time> | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | I | N | A date and/or time of day | | | | | | |
| <keygen> | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | I | R | A key pair generator control | | | | Currently (June -09) only supported by Gecko and Opera | Selectable list of key sizes. | |

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| Lists | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | B | N | Unordered list | Lists should be used as much as possible. Many things, e.g. Menus, are really lists. List are easy to scan and easy to see. | Do not use for indentation only | | | Bullet list, left indentation | |
| | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | B | N | Ordered list | | | | | Numbered list, left indentation | |
| | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | B | N | List item | | | | | Item in list | |
| <dl> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | B | N | Definition list | W3C says use for dialogue and other not obvious purposes, others disagree. | | Used for "define" commands in Google | | | |
| <dt> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | B | N | Definition term | | | | | | |
| <dd> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | B | N | Definition data | | | 40px left indentation | | | |
| <div> | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | B | N | Groups <dt> and <dd> | | | | | | |
| <nav> | | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | B | N | Navigation section | Will replace skip links. Not really a list. Put here for comparison with <nav>. | Use ARIA landmark roles and skiplinks today. | Bots will (in the future) know that navigation is not primary content. | No support yet (2009-08-15) | |
| <dir> | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | | B | N | Directory listing | | Use or | | | Like | |
| Coding & formulas | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <code> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | Computer code | Use with CSS-rule: "white-space: pre;" or the pre element | Syntax highlight with CSS-classes | | | Monospaced | |
| <var> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | Variable data | | Not (only) a "variable" in programming | | | Italics | |
| <kbd> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | Represents user input | | | | | Monospaced | |
| <samp> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | N | Output from computer | | | | | Monospaced | |

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| Objects, multimedia, etc. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I | R | Image | Do use the alt-attribute, but wisely | Use CSS for decorative images. | The alt attribute will be indexed for image searches | | | (An image) | | | |
| <object> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | I* | R | (object that normally requires a plugin) | | Use (X)HTML, CSS and DOM-scripts if possible. | Content in objects usually will not be indexed | Often bad support for fallback content. MSIE will treat as ActiveX. | | (Animation, applet, etc) | | | |
| <param> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | I | | | | | | | | | | |
| <canvas> | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | I* | R | Provide fallback content | | | | Already supported by many, but not MSIE | Animation – blank until script starts drawing | | | | |
| <embed> | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | I | R | | Allowed in HTML 5, but still inferior to <object> | | | | (Animation, video, sound) | | | | |
| <noembed> | | | | | | | | | | | I* | I | | | | | | (Fallback for embed) | | | | |
| <audio> | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | I | R | Audio stream | | | | Ogg, Vorbis and Theora must be supported. Apple likes QT, MSIE wma/wmv | Controls may be shown | | | | |
| <video> | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | I | R | Video or movie | | | | | Video + controls may be shown | | | | |
| <source> | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | I | Alternative formats for <audio> or <video>, where the UA chooses the best one | | | | | | | | | |
| <applet> | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | I | R | | Use <object> | | | | Java applet | | | | |
| <map> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | I | | | Avoid imagemaps! If you must have one, use the title attribute! | | | | | | | |
| <area> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | I | | | | | | | | | | |
| <marquee> | | | | | | | | | | | B | N | Avoid flickering | Do not use. Use unobtrusive DOM-scripts for behaviour. | | MSIE proprietary, but supported by most | Scrolling text | | | | | |
| <blink> | | | | | | | | | | | I | N | Avoid flickering | | | NS proprietary, works in Opera | Blinking text | | | | | |
| <bgsound> | | | | | | | | | | | | I | A nuisance! | Use the object element | | MSIE proprietary | Plays a sound | | | | | |
| Frames | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <frameset> | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | B | N | | | | | | | | | | |
| <frame> | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | B | R | | | | | | | | | | |
| <iframe> | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | B | R | New nested browsing context | Do not use frames! If you must, use the title attribute! Consider using <object> instead of iframe. | | Only option for rich text editing in Gecko <= 1.8.1 | HTML 5 introduces seamless frames | | | | | |
| <noframes> | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | B | I | | Provide meaningful content and links to the framed content. Not "you need a better browser"! | | | | | | | | |

All elements are sorted with in their groups in prioritized order. Recommended (X)HTML versions are mint-colored.

| Element | Standards | | | | | | | | | | Information | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| Miscellaneous | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <bdo> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | | | I | N | Do think about i18n issues | Probably better to use CSS | | | | | |
| <plaintext> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | B | N | (Stop treat code as HTML) | Keep it forgotten! For some uses, see CDATA. | | | Used to be some, but who cares? | Monospaced | |
| <ruby> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | I | N | Ruby overall container | | | | MSIE 5+ is currently the only browser that has support for ruby, but it is not complete. | | |
| <rb> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | I | N | Ruby base container | | | | | | |
| <rtc> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | I | N | Ruby text container | | | | | | |
| <rb> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | I | N | Ruby base | | | | | | |
| <rt> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | I | N | Ruby text | | | | | | |
| <rp> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | I | N | Denotes "fall-back" characters for ruby | | | | | | |
| Uncommon proprietary elements | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <layer> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | (DHTML layer + fallback) | DHTML era practices stink! | Forget these! There never will be a situation where they will solve any real problem. | | | NS 4 proprietary, not supported by any other browser (partial in Safari) | |
| <nolayer> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | (inline layer) | | | | | | |
| <comment> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | (Alternative to <!-- -->) | | | | MSIE proprietary, contents will be shown in all other browsers but Opera! Anonymous elements will be part of the DOM in HTML 5. | | |
| <xml> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | (XML data island) | | | | MSIE only | | |
| <multicol> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | CSS 3 will have columns | | | NS 3 and 4 proprietary | (Used to be: ends content in evenly spaced columns) | |
| <spacer> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Use CSS | | | | (Used to be like a spacer gif) | |

All elements are sorted with-in their groups in prioritized order. Recommended (X)HTML versions are mint-colored.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|-----------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|---------------|-----------|------------------------|--------------------|
| | HTML 3.2 | HTML 4.01 strict | HTML 4.01 transitional | HTML 4.01 frameset | XHTML 1.0 strict | XHTML 1.0 transitional | XHTML 1.0 frameset | XHTML 1.1 | XHTML 1.1 Basic | (X)HTML 5.0 | [B]/lock/[I]/inline/[T]able | [I]/visible/[N]ormal/[R]eplaced | Semantic meaning | Usability & Accessibility | Best practice | SEO notes | Notable browser issues | Unstyled appearan- |
| Element | Standards | | | | | | | | | | Information | | | | | | | |

Official information:

- HTML 2.0 spec <http://ftp.ics.uci.edu/pub/ietf/html/rfc1866.txt>
- HTML 3.2 spec <http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-html32>
- HTML 4.01 tags <http://www.w3.org/TR/1999/REC-html401-19991224/index/elements.html>
- XHTML 1.0 <http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/>
- XHTML 1.1 <http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml11/>
- XHTML basic <http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml-basic/>
- XHTML Mobile <http://www.openmobilealliance.org/> (dropped from table above)
- XHTML 2.0 tags <http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml2/elements.html>
- (X)HTML 5.0 <http://whatwg.org/specs/web-apps/current-work/>
- Server events <http://dev.w3.org/html5/eventsources/>
- Web Forms 2.0 <http://www.whatwg.org/specs/web-forms/current-work/>
- Ruby annotations <http://www.w3.org/TR/ruby/> (not included in table above)
- XHTML Print <http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml-print/> (not included in table above)
- Xframes <http://www.w3.org/TR/xframes/>

Key and explanations

- ✓ In standard
- ☒ Deprecated or discouraged = Do not use!
- ⚡ Will maybe be in (X)HTML 5, but not yet documented.
- Sometimes available depending upon serialization or other factors.

Block/Inline/Table refers to default CSS rendering and nesting rules. Elements that have "display: inline" but may contain block elements have been marked "I*"
Normal/Invisible/Replaced also refers to CSS treatment of the element. Some elements might be more than one. The normal case is listed.

Useful links

- www.triin.net/temp/html-elements.html
- meiert.com/en/indices/html-elements/
- simon.html5.org/html5-elements
- www.w3.org/2007/07/xhtml-basic-ref.html
- dev.w3.org/html5/html4-differences/Overview.html

Background and intended use

The recommendations in the table above represents the personal opinion of Lars Gunther, although valuable suggestions have been provided by April Siegfried, Christian Montoya, Alexey Feldgendler and Simon Pieters. This list is intended to be used as a reference while coding (or seeing other's code) and as notes for learning (X)HTML. Strict doctypes that are supported by the browsers of today is recommended for normal web pages. Knowledgeable authors may of course start experimenting with (X)HTML 5. Proprietary elements are included for reference if stumbled upon. A few XHTML 2.0 are included as examples of where (X)HTML might be heading in the future.

Book references

Dynamic HTML: The definitive reference, Third Edition, by Danny Goodman. Sebastopol, CA, USA: O'Reilly Media, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-596-52740-2

All elements are sorted within their groups in prioritized order. Recommended (X)HTML versions are mint-colored.

| Element | Standards | Information | Semantic meaning | Usability & Accessibility | Best practice | SEO notes | Notable browser issues | Unstyled appearance |
|---------|---------------------------------|-------------|------------------|---------------------------|---------------|-----------|------------------------|---------------------|
| | HTML 3.2 | | | | | | | |
| | HTML 4.01 strict | | | | | | | |
| | HTML 4.01 transitional | | | | | | | |
| | HTML 4.01 frameset | | | | | | | |
| | XHTML 1.0 strict | | | | | | | |
| | XHTML 1.0 transitional | | | | | | | |
| | XHTML 1.0 frameset | | | | | | | |
| | XHTML 1.1 | | | | | | | |
| | XHTML 1.1 Basic | | | | | | | |
| | XHTML 2.0 | | | | | | | |
| | (X)HTML 5.0 | | | | | | | |
| | [B]/lock/[I]/p/line/[T]/table | | | | | | | |
| | [I]/visible/[N]ormal/[R]eplaced | | | | | | | |

HTML 3.0 elements not in table above

<http://friendlybit.com/html/forgotten-html-elements/>
<http://www.w3.org/MarkUp/html3/>

<http://www.w3.org/MarkUp/html3/>

| | |
|---------------|--|
| <abbrev> | Turned into abbr |
| <app> | Synonym for applet |
| <au> | Synonym for <author> |
| <author> | "Author" |
| <banner> | Special element for ads (+ some more uses)! "Should not scroll". Today: position: fixed; |
| <bg> | Sort of like blockquote |
| <credit> | Who is quoted with <bg> or who has made an image shown with <fig> |
| <fig> | Advanced alternative to img. Revived (in changed form) in (X)HTML 5 as <figure> |
| <fn> | Footnote. |
| <hp1><hp2>etc | Highlight text in a browser-specified way. Sort of revived as <mark> in (X)HTML 5 |
| <lang> | Language |
| <lh> | List header |
| <math> | Equation or formula (had lots of sub-elements) |
| <nextid> | Deprecated already by RFC 1866 (5.2.6) but actually supported by MSIE 4+ (sic!) |
| <note> | Explanatory note outside of text flow. May be revived in (X)HTML 5 |
| <overlay> | Used with fig |
| <person> | Signifies that it is a name |
| <range> | Defines a range within the document |
| <spot> | The spot tag can be used to specify a location in the document where there is no tag. |
| <tab> | Tabulator |

Elements that have been part of the HTML 5 editors draft at one point, but dropped

| | |
|----------------|--|
| <datatemplate> | The datatemplate element brings together the various rules that form a data template. The element doesn't itself do anything exciting. |
| <rule> | The rule element represents a template of content that is to be used for elements when updating an element's generated content. |
| <nest> | The nest element represents a point in a template where the user agent should recurse and start inserting the children of the data node that matches the rule in which the nest element is used. |
| <eventsource> | Server side events |
| <datagrid> | Interactive representation of tree, list, or tabular data |
| <bb> | Browser Button – an UA command that the user can invoke |
| <dialog> | Conversations, irc-logs and Shakespeare |

XHTML 2.0 elements not in table above

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Structural module | Xforms module |
| Blockcode | Action |
| Separator | Delete |
| Accessibility module | Dispatch |
| Access | Group |
| Text module | Load |
| L (line of text) | Message |
| List module | Model |
| Di (definition item) | Output |
| Events module | Range |
| ev:listener | Rebuild |
| Handler module | Recalculate |
| Handler | Refresh |
| Object Module | Repeat |
| Standby | Reset |
| Tables | Revalidate |
| Summary | Secret |
| Xframes | Select1 |
| Frames | Send |
| Group | Setfocus |
| | Setindex |
| | Setvalue |
| | Submit |
| | Switch |
| | Trigger |
| | Upload |

All elements are sorted within their groups in prioritized order. Recommended (X)HTML versions are mint-colored.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|-----------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|---------------|-----------|------------------------|---------------------|
| | HTML 3.2 | HTML 4.01 strict | HTML 4.01 transitional | HTML 4.01 frameset | XHTML 1.0 strict | XHTML 1.0 transitional | XHTML 1.0 frameset | XHTML 1.1 | XHTML 1.1 Basic | XHTML 2.0 | (X)HTML 5.0 | [B]/lock/[I]/inline/[T]/table | [I]/visible/[N]/normal/[R]/replaced | Semantic meaning | Usability & Accessibility | Best practice | SEO notes | Notable browser issues | Unstyled appearance |
| Element | Standards | | | | | | | | | | Information | | | | | | | | |

Updates

- 2008-02-20 Changed <m> to <mark>
- 2008-08-04 Added seamless option to iframes, <command>, <bb>; datatemplates. Changed <event-source> to <eventsourc>. Added elements to XHTML 1.1. basic. XHTML 1.1 Mobile dropped
- 2009-04-23 <keygen> is HTML 5 approved.
- 2009-06-22 Added hgroup (HTML 5). Redefined header (HTML 5). Made clear that frames and font are not part of HTML 5.
Note that underlining should always be avoided. rel="canonical" added to <a>. Added info about eventsourc (Including Comet). Notes and commentary updated throughout.
Dropped datatemplates
- 2009-06-30 More detailed explanations. Print stylesheet, version is shown.
<base> allowed in XHTML 5 (spec change) <basefont> is deprecated in HTML 4.01 (fix)
Eventsourc has been dropped **as an element** (spec change)
<html>, <listing>, <xmp> are B (block elements) (fix)
<a> Added "May contain block elements in (X)HTML 5."
<noscript>, <ins>, <object>, <noembed> and <canvas> are now marked I* (display: inline, but may contain block elements) (pedagogic change)
<embed>, <applet>, <meter>, <progress> and <keygen> are now marked I (inline) (fix)
<keygen> is now marked R (replaced) (fix)
Ruby elements are not marked inline anymore (blank) (pedagogic change)
Ruby elements <rbc>, <rtc> and <rb> marked as ? for HTML 5 (Not in spec, maybe never will be?)
<isindex> Is more described as they are treated by an HTML 5 parser. (pedagogic change)
<layer>, <nolayer>, <ilayer>, <xml>, <multicol>, <spacer> have no information any longer about inline/block or normal/invisible/replaced, since current behavior differs from the original intention (pedagogic change)
Expanded info about <isindex> (Block, text appears) (pedagogic change)
<details> is N (normal), not I/N/R (pedagogic change)
<thead> repeats on each page when printing (fix)
Table is now T (not B) (pedagogic change)
- 2009-08-15 Datagrid has been removed from HTML 5
Viewport has been redefined in both HTML and XHTML (dropped from this table)
Some housekeeping
More detail on nav
- 2009-09-21 bb has been removed from HTML 5
dialog has been removed from HTML 5