

<!DOCTYPE html> - The Right DOCTYPE Is That Simple

Be sure to choose the right DOCTYPE for your HTML web pages. The DOCTYPE declaration is no longer coded as #!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC ...#. It is simply #!DOCTYPE html#. HTML-5.com is a great guide for web developers. [TV Series & Actors and Actresses](#). Follow [TV Series](#) and [HTML 5](#) on Google+.

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Just use "<!DOCTYPE html>" for HTML 5

The `<!DOCTYPE html>` document type declaration tag is one of the [declaration tags in HTML](#) and indicates that the content of the document is using `<dfn style="font-weight: bold; font-style: normal">HTML</dfn>` (Hypertext Markup Language) coding. The name parameter of the **DOCTYPE** declaration must be `html`, matching the name of the [top element](#) of an HTML document. The `PUBLIC ...FPI...` part of the declaration (`<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC ...>`) identifies older [HTML versions](#) and should no longer be included in the DOCTYPE declaration.

The **DOCTYPE** declaration comes after the [xml declaration](#) and optional [xml-stylesheet processing instruction](#), and before the starting `<html>` tag.

HTML Best Practices - Why specify a DOCTYPE?

From the W3C *Tips for Webmasters*:

`<blockquote>`Why specify a `DOCTYPE`? Because it defines which version of (X)HTML your document is actually using, and this is a critical piece of information needed by browsers or other tools processing the document.`</blockquote>`

Since the document type is needed by web browsers, viewers and other HTML parsing tools in order to properly interpret a document as a particular version of HTML, the information provided by the `<!DOCTYPE html>` tag is especially significant in situations where there are no HTTP headers available or when the headers do not indicate an XHTML/XML media type such as `application/xhtml+xml`. Therefore, the **DOCTYPE** declaration is an important element in HTML documents, especially when creating [polyglot HTML documents](#).

How to verify the DOCTYPE is working right

To verify that the DOCTYPE on a web page is working, bring up the page in Firefox (on a Windows system). Look for the three indicators on the right hand side of the tool bar, as shown in the screen capture below. You can mouse over them to get a pop-up tool tip showing what the indicators mean. The first one should be a green check mark to indicate the page is being displayed in Standards Compliance Mode. The other two should also be green indicating the page is free from CSS errors and free from JavaScript errors, respectively.

``

[back to top](#)

Syntax of the <!DOCTYPE html> Tag for HTML 5

```
<a mode="pre" href=" ../xml-declaration/index.html#syntax"><?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?></a>
<a mode="pre" href=" ../xml-stylesheet-instruction/index.html#syntax"><?xml-stylesheet ...?></a>
<b mode="pre"><!DOCTYPE html></b>
<a mode="pre" href=" ../html-tag/index.html#syntax"><html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml"></a>
...
</html>
```

Rules for coding the DOCTYPE declaration for HTML 5

- Code the **DOCTYPE** declaration just before the beginning [<html> tag](#), below the [xml declaration](#) and any processing instructions such as an [xml-stylesheet processing instruction](#).
- The **DOCTYPE** declaration starts with the characters `<!` . This indicates that the element is a [SGML](#) declaration rather than an HTML tag. (Besides the DOCTYPE declaration, the only other HTML code that starts with the characters `<!` are [HTML comments](#).)
- Code the name of the [top element](#) of the document. The DOCTYPE for HTML documents is `html`. This is not a named attribute value, and therefore is *not* enclosed in quotes.
- Do *not* include a [PUBLIC](#) DTD identifier or [SYSTEM](#) URL. There is [no DTD in HTML 5](#).
- The **DOCTYPE** declaration ends with the character `>`. (There is no `!` or self-closing `/` before the `>` terminating delimiter.)
- The **DOCTYPE** declaration does *not* have a corresponding end tag.

[back to top](#)

Attributes of the <!DOCTYPE html> Declaration

The `<!DOCTYPE html>` tag is an SGML declaration and therefore does not have any named attributes like those used when coding other HTML tags.

The tag name of the top element of the HTML document follows the [DOCTYPE](#) keyword.

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
```

The [PUBLIC](#) identifier should *never* be coded on the **DOCTYPE** declaration.

If software generating HTML code requires that either a [PUBLIC](#) or [SYSTEM](#) identifier be included, then the [SYSTEM](#) keyword may be coded followed by the value `"about:legacy-compat"` enclosed in double quotes.

```
<!DOCTYPE html SYSTEM "about:legacy-compat">
```

[back to top](#)

DOCTYPE Declaration Examples

Examples of the DOCTYPE declaration in HTML 5

<!DOCTYPE html> with no additional entity declarations

```
<?<a mode="pre" href=" ../xml-declaration/">xml</a> version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<?<a mode="pre" href=" ../xml-stylesheet-instruction/">xml-stylesheet</a> type="text/xsl" href="/s
```

```
<b mode="pre"><!DOCTYPE html></b>
<a mode="pre" href=" ../html-tag/index.html#syntax"><html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml">
  ...
</html>
```

<!> indicates that this is a [SGML](#) declaration, **DOCTYPE** indicates the declaration is for the document type, **html** is the tag name of the top element of the document and **>** ends the declaration.

If software generating HTML code does not allow the DTD to be omitted, the URI `about:legacy-compat` may be specified as a **SYSTEM** identifier:

```
<!DOCTYPE html SYSTEM "about:legacy-compat">
```

<!DOCTYPE html> with entities defined in an internal subset

```
<?<a mode="pre" href=" ../xml-declaration/">xml</a> version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<?<a mode="pre" href=" ../xml-stylesheet-instruction/">xml-stylesheet</a> type="text/xsl" href="
<b mode="pre"><!DOCTYPE html [
  <!ENTITY nbsp "&#160;">
]></b>
<a mode="pre" href=" ../html-tag/index.html#" title="<html> tag"><html xmlns="http://www.w3.org
  ...
</html>
```

[back to top](#)

Changes in HTML 5 - <!DOCTYPE html> Declaration

What's new in HTML 5

There is [no DTD in HTML 5](#). Therefore, the `<!DOCTYPE html>` tag should never contain a **PUBLIC FPI** and preferably should not include a **SYSTEM** identifier either. If the **SYSTEM** identifier *is* specified, the value should always be `about:legacy-compat`.

Differences between HTML 5 and earlier versions of HTML

In HTML 5, there is no more `<dfn>transitional DOCTYPE</dfn>`, which allowed [deprecated presentational elements](#) to be included in the HTML code. In previous [versions of HTML](#) the `<dfn>separation of content from presentation</dfn>` using the `<dfn>strict DOCTYPE</dfn>` with [style sheets](#) was optional. Going forward, web developers should *always* use [style sheets](#).

The new `<!DOCTYPE html>` declaration is much simpler and easier to remember. The **PUBLIC** and **SYSTEM** DTD identifiers should be removed from these declarations:

```
<!DOCTYPE html <span mode="pre" class="incorrect">PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.0 Strict//EN" "ht
<!DOCTYPE html <span mode="pre" class="incorrect">PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.0 Transitional//EN
<!DOCTYPE html <span mode="pre" class="incorrect">PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Strict//EN" "h
<!DOCTYPE html <span mode="pre" class="incorrect">PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//
<!DOCTYPE html <span mode="pre" class="incorrect">PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Strict//EN" "h
<!DOCTYPE html <span mode="pre" class="incorrect">PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//
<!DOCTYPE html <span mode="pre" class="incorrect">PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.1//EN" "http://w
```

HTML pages that include a `<dfn>DTD</dfn>` (DOCTYPE definition) in the document type declaration as shown above may be interpreted as one of the older (1997, 1999, 2000 or 2001) [versions of HTML](#) or, worse yet, using `<dfn>quirks mode</dfn>`. Once the **PUBLIC**

[FPI](#) and DTD identifiers have been removed, the pages should only be interpreted as HTML 5 <dfn>standards mode</dfn> documents.

[back to top](#)

THE END