HTML <meta/> Tag

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HTML <meta/> Tag

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The <meta/> Tag in HTML 5

The `<meta/>` tag is used to define metadata for the HTML document or directives for the HTTP protocol. HTML `metatag` elements have a `content` attribute and either a `name` attribute for document metadata or an `http-equiv` attribute for protocol directives.

```
  <meta http-equiv="..." content="..."/>
  <meta name="..." content="..."/>
  <meta itemprop="..." content="..."/>
```

See the HTML <meta> tag list for some of the values that can be coded for the `name` attribute or the `http-equiv` attribute. Other metadata can be expressed using specific HTML tags, such as:

- <base>
- <link>
- <script>
- <style>
- <title>

List of <meta> tags in HTML 5

Most Common Metatags

The most common HTML metatags include:

- <meta name="description"/> tag
- <meta name="google"/> tag
- <meta name="googlebot"/> tag
- <meta name="keywords"/> tag
- <meta name="robots"/> tag
- <meta name="verify"/> tag

- <link rel="apple-touch-icon/> tag for Web Clips
- <meta name="format-detection"/> tag
- <meta name="HandheldFriendly"/> tag

- <meta name="viewport"/> tag

- <meta name="apple-mobile-web-app-capable"/> tag
- <meta name="apple-mobile-web-app-status-bar-style"/> tag
- <link rel="apple-touch-startup-image/> tag

- <meta http-equiv="default-style"/> tag
- <meta http-equiv="refresh"/> tag
- <meta http-equiv="Cache-Control"/> tag
- <meta http-equiv="Content-Disposition"/> tag
- <meta http-equiv="Content-Type"/> tag
- <meta http-equiv="Expires"/> tag
- <meta http-equiv="X-UA-Compatible"/> tag

Less common HTML metatags include:

- <meta name="application-name"/> tag
- <meta name="author"/> tag
- <meta name="classification"/> tag
- <meta name="copyright"/> tag
- <meta name="formatter"/> tag
- <meta name="generator"/> tag
- <meta name="rating"/> tag

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<meta/> Tag Syntax

```
<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>
  <a mode="pre" href="../doctype-declaration/index.html#syntax"><!DOCTYPE html></a>
  <html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml">
     <a mode="pre" href="../head-tag/index.html#syntax"><head></a>
        <a mode="pre" href="../../definitions/index.html#metadata-content">... metadata content ...</
        <b mode="pre"><meta http-equiv="..." content="..."/></b>
        <a mode="pre" href="../../definitions/index.html#metadata-content">... metadata content ...</
        <a mode="pre" href="../title-tag/index.html#syntax"><title></a>  My Title</title>
        <a mode="pre" href="../../definitions/index.html#metadata-content">... metadata content ...</
        <b mode="pre"><meta name="..." content="..."/></b>
        <a mode="pre" href="../../definitions/index.html#metadata-content">... metadata content ...</
     </head>
     <a mode="pre" href="../body-tag/index.html#syntax"><body></a>
        <a mode="pre" href="../html-tag-list.html#flow-content-model">... flow content expected ...</
        <b mode="pre"><meta itemprop="..." content="..."/></b>
        ...
        <a mode="pre" href="../html-tag-list.html#phrasing-content-model">... phrasing content expecte
        <b mode="pre"><meta itemprop="..." content="..."/></b>
        ...
     </body>
  </html>
```

Rules for coding the HTML meta element

Make sure you understand the difference between a tag and element and are familiar with the definitions of namespace and other HTML terms.

1. Code any <meta> tags in the <head> section of the HTML document where metadata content is expected.
2. Each **meta** element consists of a standalone <meta/> tag. The element name uses lower case letters and should be in the HTML namespace, which it will pick up automatically from the `xmlns` attribute on the <html> tag.
3. Code either a `name` attribute or an `http-equiv` attribute, but not both. The value of the attribute, which is enclosed in double quotes, is the name of the metadata or directive.
4. Code the `content` attribute with the value for the named metadata or directive in double quotes.
5. Since the `<meta/>` tag is a void element, it should always be coded as a self-closing tag terminated with the delimiter string `/>`.

1. Code the <meta> tag in the <body> section of the HTML document where either flow content or phrasing content is expected.
2. The **meta** element consists of a standalone <meta/> tag. The element name uses lower case letters and should be in the HTML namespace, which it will pick up automatically from the `xmlns` attribute on the <html> tag.
3. Inside the <meta> tag, include an `itemprop` attribute to indicate the **meta** element represents a microdata property. The value of the attribute, which is enclosed in double quotes, is the name or URL of the microdata property.
4. Inside the <meta> tag, code a `content` attribute with the value of the microdata property in double quotes.
5. Since the `<meta/>` tag is a void element, it should always be coded as a self-closing tag terminated with the delimiter string `/>`.

<meta/> Content Model

Contents of the meta element

Content: *Empty.* All properties are coded using attributes.

Since the `<meta/>` tag is a void element, it is not allowed to have any content, even HTML comments and therefore should always be coded as a self-closing standalone tag, ending with the delimiters `/>` rather than just `>` (`<meta .../>`).

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<meta/> Tag Attributes

Attributes of the <meta/> tag

global attributes	In addition to the personal attributes of the <meta/> tag below, any of the common HTML attributes can also be coded. The `itemprop` attribute is required when the <meta/> tag is used where flow content or phrasing content is expected.
`charset`	

`content`	**for <meta http-equiv="...">**
	the value of the HTTP header directive
	for <meta name="...">
	the value of the document metadata
	for <meta itemprop="...">
	the value of the microdata property

`http-equiv`	`http-equiv="content-language"`
	`http-equiv="content-type"`
	`http-equiv="default-style"`
	`http-equiv="refresh"`

`name`	`name="application-name"`
	`name="author"`
	`name="classification"`
	`name="copyright"`
	`name="description"`
	`name="formatter"`
	`name="generator"`
	`name="google"`
	`name="googlebot"`
	`name="handheldfriendly"`
	`name="keywords"`
	`name="rating"`
	`name="verify"`
	`name="viewport"` - see Using <meta name="viewport"/> to Control Zoom in Mobile Browsers

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<meta/> Tag Examples

Examples of the <meta/> tag in HTML 5

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Changes in HTML 5 - <meta/> Tag

What's new in HTML 5

Differences between HTML 5 and HTML 4 / xHTML

- The `<meta charset="..."/>` tag should no longer be used because it is supported only for the purpose of migrating from xHTML.

In ployglot HTML documents the `<meta/>` tag is coded as a self-closing tag the same as in the 2000-2010 Recommendations from the W3C HTML Working Group. Those specifications changed the ending delimiter to `/>` from `>` in older recommendations. They also defined the HTML namespace for the **meta** element type name and the names of other HTML element types.

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THE END