

HTML Acronyms, Abbreviations and Definitions Tutorial

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HTML Tags for Acronyms, Abbreviations and Definitions

(Some links on this page take you to details in the [HTML Tag Reference](#). Bookmark this page in your Favorites so you can come back to it later.)

The tags for including definitions, abbreviations and acronyms in HTML 5 include:

- [abbr](#) for [abbreviations and acronyms in HTML](#) (don't use the [deprecated HTML <acronym> tag](#))
- [dfn](#) for [definitions in HTML](#)

For the meanings of HTML vocabulary terms, see [Definitions of HTML Terminology](#).

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Combining the <abbr> tag with the <dfn> tag

Using the <dfn> tag with <abbr> to define an acronym or abbreviation

The value of the `title` attribute of the `<dfn>` tag should always be the term that is being defined. When an acronym or abbreviation is associated with a definition, it could be either the abbreviated form or its expanded meaning that is being defined. Whether the acronym or its expansion appears in the `<dfn>` tag's `title` attribute, which identifies the specific term being defined, depends on whether it's the abbreviated form or its expanded meaning that is being defined.

An `<abbr>`'s direct parent `<dfn>` tag will also assume the value of the `<abbr>`'s `title` attribute. When an abbreviation is a short form of the actual term being defined, the `title` attribute should be the full expanded acronym meaning, *not* the acronym or abbreviation that stands for the subject of the definition. Since this is the same purpose that the `title` attribute of the `<abbr>` tag serves, the title can simply be coded there:

```
<dfn><abbr title="Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and  
Numbers">ICANN</abbr></dfn>  
is the international organization which helps ensure that  
Internet domain names are assigned in an orderly manner.
```

When an acronym's meaning is being clarified by expanding it, then it is the acronym itself that is being defined and the `title` attribute of the parent `<dfn>` tag also needs to be

coded to indicate it is not the expanded meaning in the [<abbr> tag](#)'s title but the acronym or abbreviation itself that is being defined:

```
When we use the acronym  
<dfn title="RSS"><abbr title="Really Simple Syndication">RSS</abbr></dfn>  
it is the abbreviation for <b>Really Simple Syndication</b>, not RDF Site  
➔ Summary.
```

There are some good [examples of defining acronyms in HTML](#) on the Acronyms.net site.

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THE END