

## HTML Basics

By Lorrie Jackson

### WHY A TECHTORIAL?

#### What will I learn today?

You will learn to teach students in grades 4-12 how to create a simple HTML page.

#### What hardware and/or software does the techtorial apply to?

The techtorial applies to PCs with an Internet Browser such as Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator.

#### Which National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers does the techtorial address?

The techtorial will help teachers accomplish standard IIIc in particular.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has developed a set of National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers. Standards or Performance Indicators are included for each techtorial to help teachers and administrators improve technology proficiency. For a complete description of the standards indicated, go to [NETS for Teachers](#).

### WHY TEACH HTML?

HTML (HyperText Markup Language) is a programming language used to format a Web page. *Formatting* refers to the font color, type, size, and style, as well as the arrangement of words and paragraphs on the page. The formatting determines the "look" of a Web page.

Learning a programming language

- helps students improve their logical skills and higher order thinking skills.
- helps students understand basic art and design principles.
- is fun. Students love seeing what they can create!
- is free. Any computer with an Internet browser can be used to create HTML.
- is easy. Teach a little, then let the students learn everything else on their own.

And, best of all, you don't have to be a "techie" to teach and create HTML!

### STRAIGHT TO THE SOURCE

Invite students to go to their (or your) favorite, age-appropriate Web site. Have them right-click the page, and then left-click View Source. (Note: Make sure students right-click on white space, and not near or on a link, picture, or text.)

Here's what you might see if you go to the Education World home page:

Here's what you'd see if you right-clicked and selected View Source on that same page:

```

<html>
<head>
<title>Education world®; The Educator's Best Friend</title>
<meta name="description" content="Education world®. The Educator's Best Friend. The
<meta name="KEYWORDS" content="education, curriculum, lesson plans, directory, portal,
<meta name="distribution" content="global,local">
<meta name="copyright" content="Page design copyright 2001,2002,2003,2004 by Education World®" />
</head>
<style type="text/css">
body,td {
font-family: Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
font-size: 92%;
color: #000000
}

```

Point out to students the symbols and words on the page. Explain that some of those symbols and words are HTML code. Tell students they now are going to learn some HTML code and make their own Web page.

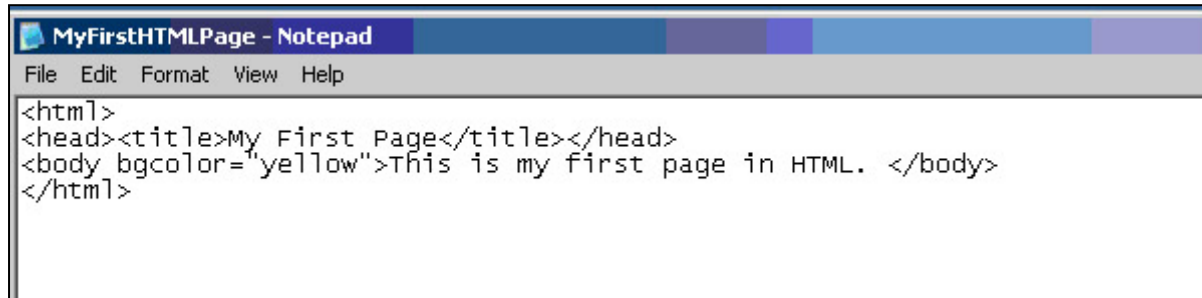
### LEARN THE CODE

To create their own "Five Minute Web Page," have students

- Go to Start>All Programs>Accessories>Notepad. (Be sure students are working in Notepad and not in a word processing program.)
- Type `< html >` and then hit ENTER.

- Type `<head><title>My First Page</title></head>` and then hit ENTER.
- Type `<body bgcolor="yellow">This is my first page in HTML.</body>` and then hit ENTER.
- Type `</html>` and then hit ENTER.
- Go to File > Save As.
- Choose All Files in the box next to Save as Type.
- Type **MyFirstHTMLPage.html** in the box next to File Name.
- Save this file to the Desktop or My Documents. Hit OK.

Your students' files should look like this:



```
MyFirstHTMLPage - Notepad
File Edit Format View Help
<html>
<head><title>My First Page</title></head>
<body bgcolor="yellow">This is my first page in HTML. </body>
</html>
```

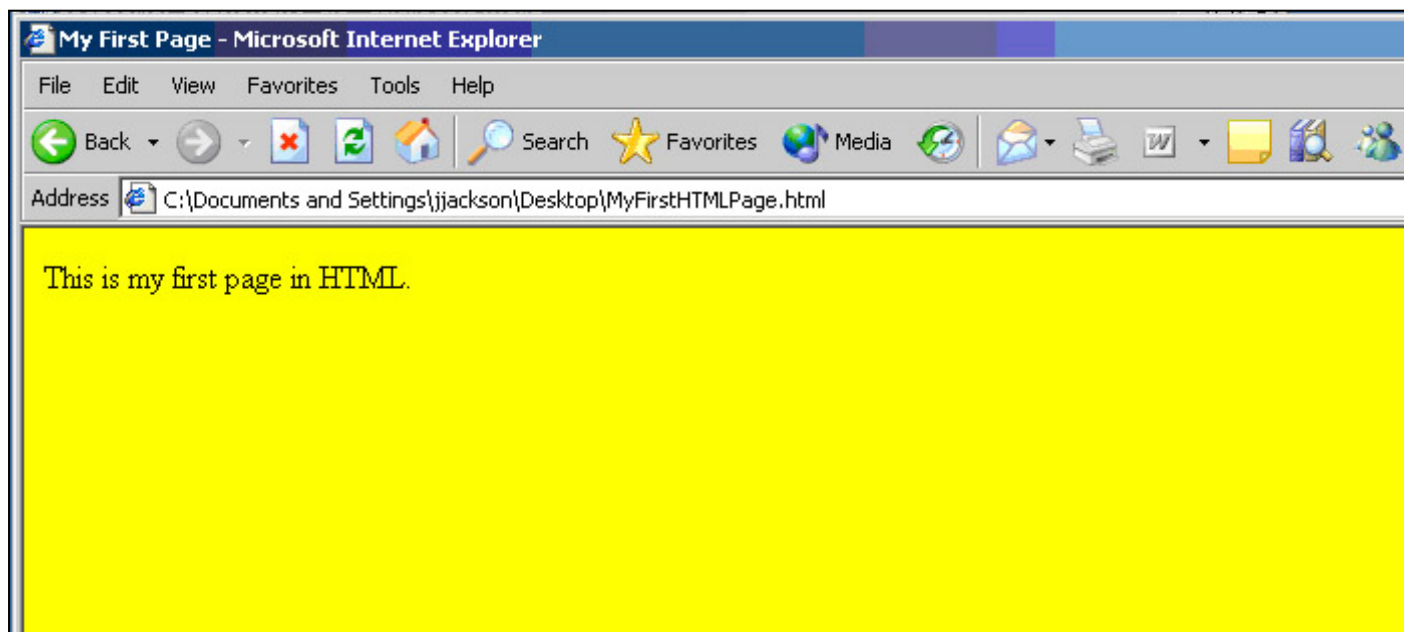
Have students close or minimize the Notepad window.

### SEE WHAT YOU'VE DONE

Students now can view the page they've created. In Internet Explorer, they

- Go to File in the browser's menu bar and click Open (or Open File).
- Locate the **MyFirstHTMLPage.html** file. (Click Browse in the OPEN window, or go to the directory the file was saved in.)
- Click the file name, and then click Open.
- If necessary, click OK in the OPEN window.

Your students' pages should look like this:



Ta da! Your students have created their first Web page!

Note: This page will appear only on students' computers, not on the Web. Uploading a page to the Web requires a host server. Ask your tech staff or administrators for more information on uploading school-based pages.

## LEARN THE SYMBOLS

Are your students wondering about the meaning of the symbols they used? Have them right-click the Web page they created, and then left-click View Source to see their HTML tags. Explain to students the meaning of each tag:

- `<html>` indicates a Web page.
- `<head><title>` indicates the beginning of the page's title. (Notice that the words "My First Page" appear in the blue bar at the top of the Web page.)
- `<body>` indicates the beginning of the Web page. Any words or numbers typed after this tag appear on the Web page itself.
- `<body bgcolor="yellow">` indicates that the background color of the page will be yellow. (Invite students to try typing another color name in this position.)
- Tags that have a slash mark -- /-- indicate the end of that HTML coding. (So, `</title>` indicates the end of the page's title.)

## MORE FUN STUFF

Now that your students (and you!) know the basics of HTML coding, they can add even more formatting to their Web page. Encourage them to try using:

- `<b>` and `</b>` to begin and end bolded text.
- `<i>` and `</i>` to begin and end italic text.
- `<center>` and `</center>` to begin and end centered text.
- `<marquee>` and `</marquee>` to begin and end scrolling text. (This only works in Internet Explorer.)
- `<br>` to add a line break.
- `<p>` and `</p>` to begin and end a paragraph.

## TELL ME MORE!

### Where can I find more information?

When coding in HTML, one tiny mistake can mean your whole page doesn't work at all. Use [Tidy](#) to clean up your Web pages. Students can install this free utility on their computers to help them double-check their work and learn from frequently made mistakes.

If you're interested in seeing how accessible your page is to those with disabilities or special needs, check out the [Cynthia Says Portal](#).

Finally, although HTML will do the job for most basic pages, the newest evolutions in coding languages are XHTML and XML. To learn more about those languages, how they differ from HTML, and when/why to use them, go to [XHTML Overview](#).