

Forms (Plus Miscellaneous HTML) Tutorial:

How Forms Work:

1. You fill out form on Web page and hit submit
2. Browser sends content of form to Web server
3. Server receives form and data and passes it to the appropriate web application (software program someone wrote) to be processed
4. Web application creates a brand new XHTML page
5. Server sends new XHTML page back to Browser
6. Browser gets response and displays it.

We aren't worrying about writing the web application on the server side yet (step 3, above), which means we won't be processing the forms yet.

Instead we will be mailing the content of the form to someone or you can create a new mail address just to receive the form information.

Part I. How forms work:

Notes about forms:

- All forms start with `<form>` and end with `</form>`. These tags only occur **once** for each form.
- Inside the form tags, you can include paragraphs, headers, etc.
- **All forms should have 1 (and only 1) "submit" button (e.g., `<input type = "submit"...>`) inside the form tags (usually right above the `</form>` tag)**
- The submit button takes the content of the form and does whatever action you told it to do when you started the form

Mailing a Form:

For our purposes, we'll use a quick and dirty way of mailing the content of the form to someone.

1. In a web page (either a new web page, created from your template, or the web page in which you created the last form), create a new form by:

a. In your web site (and not within any other tags!) place the following first line: (This is creating a new form. Everything between this line and `</form>` is the new form you are creating.)

```
<form action = "mailto:youremailaddress@udel.edu" method = "post">
```

- replace youremailaddress@udel.edu with a valid email address so you can see what happens.

b. inside the form, **include a text field:**

Add:

```
<p>Your Name: <br >  
<input type = "text" size = "20" name = "VisitorName"> <br >
```

- **<input** means it's a form element (like a button or a box) that takes input from someone who's viewing your web page.
- **type = "text"** means it's a text box
- **size="20"** is the length of the box.
- **name = "VisitorName">** is the name given to the field when it's mailed to you.

c. inside the form, **Add a submit button:**

Add:

```
<input type = "submit" value = "Email This Form">
```

- **type = "submit"** means when you click on the button formed by this, action will be taken. (the action specified at the beginning of the form, or "mailto:youremailaddress@udel.edu" .
- **value="Email This Form"** is just the text put onto the button.

d. Close the form: Add:

```
</form>
```

e. save the file. View it in a browser. You should see a textbox. Type in a name and click on the "Email This Form" button. Check your email.

f. In the **submit** button code (in the form), change "Email This Form" to "Send me a message"

g. Save and view in browser. See the difference?

h. In the submit button code in the form, try changing 20 to 40.

i. Save and view in browser. See the difference?

j. In the text box code, add a default value:

To add a default value for the textbox, we need to add a value to the value. Modify your textbox so that it looks like look like:

```
<input type = "text" size = "20" value = "Henrietta Messerschmidt"
name = "VisitorName" >
```

k. Save and view in browser. See the difference?

2. Add a Radio Button:

a. Inside the form you just created (i.e., between the opening and closing form tags), add the following code:

```
<input type="radio" name="hotornot" value="hot" > hot button<br >
<input type="radio" name="hotornot" value="med" > medium button<br >
<input type="radio" name="hotornot" value="cold" > cold button<br >
```

b. save and view in browser. This is a Radio Button. Notice that the text that shows up is actual text (e.g., "hot button") OUTSIDE the input form tag, and not the value (e.g., "hot")

c. Hit submit. Notice what your email looks like.

d. To add a default value, modify the cold radio button as such:

```
<input type="radio" name="hotornot" value="cold" checked = "checked" >
```

e. Save and view in browser. Notice how we set a default checked button.

3. Add a Checkbox:

a. Inside the form, add the following code:

```
<input type= "checkbox" name="spice" value="salt" > Salt <br >
<input type= "checkbox" name="spice" value="pepper" > Pepper <br >
<input type= "checkbox" name="spice" value="garlic" > Garlic<br >
```

b. save and view in browser.

c. NOTE: To add a default value, modify the pepper and garlic buttons. as such:

```
<input type= "checkbox" name="spice" value="pepper" checked = "checked">
Pepper<br >
<input type= "checkbox" name="spice" value="garlic" checked = "checked">
Garlic<br >
```

d. Save and view in browser. Hit submit. Notice what your email looks like.

3. Add a Select Box:

a. Inside the form, add the following code:

```
<select name="characters">
<option value="Eric"> Eric Idle </option>
<option value="TGilliam"> Terry Gilliam</option>
<option value="John"> John Cleese</option>
<option value = "Michael">Michael Palin </option>
<option value = "Graham">Graham Chapman </option>
<option value = "TJones">Terry Jones </option>
</select>
```

b. save and view in browser. Hit submit. Notice what your email looks like.

3. Add a Text Area:

a. Inside the form, add the following code:

```
<textarea name="comments" rows="10" cols="48">Default text goes
here</textarea><br >
```

b. save and view in browser. Hit submit. Notice what your email looks like.

c. change the size of the text area by changing the number of rows and columns. Try it.

d. save and view in browser.

That's it for forms!!

Other HTML Tags:

Comments:

Comments are, in essence, notes that you write to yourself that you don't intend for the rest of the world to see. You can use a comment to remind yourself to add code or pictures later, to fix a problem, or to remind yourself what you were trying to accomplish when you designed the page. Comments can also help other people who will be working on the page with you or will be working on the page in the future.

An example of a comment might be something like:

```
...
<h3> Pictures of Lilly
</h3>
<p> These are pictures of my adorable new puppy Lilly. She's only 9 weeks old!
<!--Reminder: Add those pictures we took of Lilly on her first day in the pool -->
</p>
...
```

Comments start with

```
<!--
```

and they end with

```
-->
```

You can put them pretty much anywhere they'll be helpful to you or others.

- 1: Add a comment to your forms web page.
2. Save and view in browser

Important Note:

Comments can be used around code in your web page to make the browser ignore part of the web page. This is incredibly useful when you're trying to figure out exactly where a problem is in your code. For instance, sometimes when you are validating your web page, the error message w3c.org's validator gives you is unclear. You can put comments around sections of your page and revalidate until you get rid of the error. Then you will know exactly where the error is in your code, which makes fixing the error a lot easier!!

Special Characters:

As you know, the browser ignores spaces, tabs, and carriage returns (when you create a new line). We know the tag to create a new line is `
`.

What if you want to add spaces, and you don't want the browser to ignore them? For instance, if you've got

```
<p> This is          delayed gratification! </p>
```

The browser will show,

This is delayed gratification!

which probably isn't what you want. You can force the browser to add spaces using:

```
<p> This is &nbsp; &nbsp; &nbsp; &nbsp; &nbsp; &nbsp; &nbsp; delayed gratification! </p>
```

Each ` ` is interpreted as a space by the browser.

There is a list of special characters and how you can include them at:

<http://www.utexas.edu/learn/html/spchar.html>

That's it.

There are more html tags (e.g., `<code>`, `<address>`, etc.), but we've covered all the basic, most frequently used tags. These tags should work with almost all versions of html.