(X)HTML Best Practice Cheat Sheet

All elements are sorted within their groups in prioritized order. Recommended (X)HTML versions are mint-colored.

Element	HTML 3.2	HTML 4.01 strict	HTML 4.01 transitional	HTML 4.01 frameset	XHTML 1.0 strict	XHTML 1.0 transitional	XHTML 1.0 frameset	XHTML 1.1	XHTML 1.1 Basic	XHTML 1.1 Mobile	XHTML 2.0	(X)HTML 5.0	[B]lock(-ish)/[I]nline(-ish)/[T]able	[I]nvisible/[N]ormal/[R]eplaced	Semantic meaning	Usability & Accessibility	Best practice	SEO notes	Notable browser issues	Unstyled appearance
Standards													**Information**							
Document structure																				
<html>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		N						Viewport in XHTML
<head>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		I						
<body>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	B	N	The main content of the document					Viewport in HTML. Margin: 8px;
<title>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		I	The documents title or name	Make unique for every page		Highly ranked and will be the link-text		Text on the title-bar
<meta>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		I			Only ”name = 'description'” is useful			
<link>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		I	Indicates explicit relationship between this document and other resources. As such there are *many* good uses!					
<style>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		I			External style sheets are usually best			
<script>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		I		Unobtrusive DOM-scripts, please!	Keep scripts external		Test for capabilities, not browsers!	Script may have output
<noscript>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	♦		BI	I		Unnecassary with unobtrusive scripting techniques! Forbidden in XHTML 5.			Not ignored by true XML parsers!	
<base>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	♦			I					Ignored by MSIE for scripts	
<basefont>	✓		✓	✓										I			Use CSS			
Non element markup constructs																				
<?xml ?>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	♦		I	XML declaration	Better skip. It will put MSIE <= 6 in quirks mode and is NOT obligatory. In theory best place to specify encoding for offline usage of an XHTML document.				
<!DOCTYPE>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		I	What flavour of (X)HTML is used?		Required in every version since HTML 2.0!		Will control standards compliance or quirks mode	
<!-- -->	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		I	Code comment		Use richly while learning and developing		MSIE has **conditional** comments	
<![CDATA[ ]]>	☞	☞	☞	☞	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	♦		I	Unparsed character data		Use for inline JavaScript in XHTML		Opera may ignore CSS if MIME is true XHTML	

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Basic semantics

Element	HTML 3.2	HTML 4.01 strict	HTML 4.01 transitional	HTML 4.01 frameset	XHTML 1.0 strict	XHTML 1.0 transitional	XHTML 1.0 frameset	XHTML 1.1	XHTML 1.1 Basic	XHTML 1.1 Mobile	XHTML 2.0	(X)HTML 5.0	[B]lock(-ish)/[I]nline(-ish)/[T]able	[I]nvisible/[N]ormal/[R]eplaced	Semantic meaning	Usability & Accessibility	Best practice	SEO notes	Notable browser issues	Unstyled appearance
<h1> to <h6>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	B	N	Heading	Use in correct order		Highly ranked		Large bold text, gradually smaller. Margin-top/bottom
<p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	B	N	Paragraph					Margin-top: 1em;
<em>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	I	N	Emphasized text	Usually spoken louder	Do not equate with "italics"	Emphasised words may get higher ranking.		Italics
<strong>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	I	N	Strongly emphasised text	Usually spoken really loud!	Do not equate with "bold"			Bolder
<abbr>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	I	N	Abbreviation	"All acronyms are abbreviations". Make sure they are not confused with links. CSS-speech: Spell out initialisms.			Not in MSIE	abbr[title], acronym[title]
<acronym>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			I	N	Acronym					{ border-bottom: dotted 1px;]
<blockquote>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	B	N	Longer quote		Do not equate with "indentation"			Indented right and left.
<q>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	I	N	Short quote				No quotation marks in MSIE	Quotation marks
<cite>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	I	N	Who is cited		Not the quote as such			Italics
<ins>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	BI	N	Inserted text	Better turn underlining off				Underlined
<del>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	BI	N	Deleted text					Strike through
<dfn>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	I	N	Defined word					Italics
<h>											✓		B	N	Heading		Use with "section"			Probably like h1, h2, etc.
<dialog>												✓	B	N	Conversation (use with dt and dd)		Proposed replacement for <dl> for dialogues			Probably like <dl>
<m>												✓	I	N	Marked or highlighted text		In future, use to highlight matches to search string			

Hypertext

Element	HTML 3.2	HTML 4.01 strict	HTML 4.01 transitional	HTML 4.01 frameset	XHTML 1.0 strict	XHTML 1.0 transitional	XHTML 1.0 frameset	XHTML 1.1	XHTML 1.1 Basic	XHTML 1.1 Mobile	XHTML 2.0	(X)HTML 5.0	[B]lock(-ish)/[I]nline(-ish)/[T]able	[I]nvisible/[N]ormal/[R]eplaced	Semantic meaning	Usability & Accessibility	Best practice	SEO notes	Notable browser issues	Unstyled appearance
<a>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	I	N	Link	Link text should be understandable out of context	Any element with an id can replace its use as "anchor"	rel="nofollow" means it will not increase targets page rank		Blue underlined text. Images get a blue border.

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Legend: [B]lock(-ish)/[I]nline(-ish)/[T]able — [I]nvisible/[N]ormal/[R]eplaced

Page structure

Element	HTML 3.2	HTML 4.01 strict	HTML 4.01 transitional	HTML 4.01 frameset	XHTML 1.0 strict	XHTML 1.0 transitional	XHTML 1.0 frameset	XHTML 1.1	XHTML 1.1 Basic	XHTML 1.1 Mobile	XHTML 2.0	(X)HTML 5.0	B/I/T	I/N/R	Semantic meaning	Usability & Accessibility	Best practice	SEO notes	Notable browser issues	Unstyled appearance
`<div>`	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	B	N	Part of page		Avoid "divitis"			
`<span>`		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	I	N		Is a semantic element available? If so, use that instead.	Avoid "spanmania"			
`<pre>`	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	B	N					May override "width" in MSIE	Preformatted
`<hr>`	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	B	R	Thematic break		Do not use for visual purposes only.		Color' for MSIE, 'background-color' for Gecko	A bar
`<address>`	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			B	N	Contact information	Always use hCard for addresses, but in combination with `<address>` for contact info.				Italics
`<section>`											✓	✓	B	R	Document or application section	Section takes priority over h1-h6	Does not equal `<div>`			
`<article>`												✓	B	N	Stand alone capable section					
`<aside>`												✓	B	N	"tangentially related to the content"		Today: Good values for id or class attributes!			
`<header>`												✓	B	N	Heading for a section					
`<footer>`												✓	B	N	Footer for a section					
`<figure>`												✓	B	R	Paragraph with a caption	Caption will probably be mandated. Content may be a image.	Proposed replacement for misuse of fieldset'			
`<headings>`											✓				Set a heading					
`<listing>`	☞																			(Parsed as CDATA, preserved whitespace)
`<xmp>`	☞																			

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Visual formatting

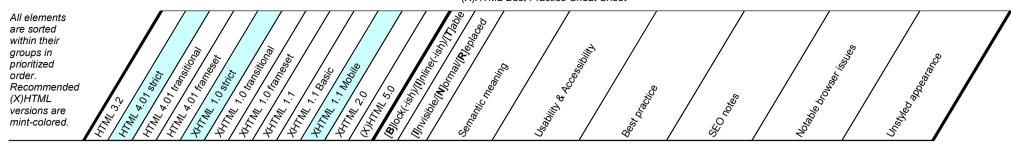| Element	HTML 3.2	HTML 4.01 strict	HTML 4.01 transitional	HTML 4.01 frameset	XHTML 1.0 strict	XHTML 1.0 transitional	XHTML 1.0 frameset	XHTML 1.1	XHTML 1.1 Basic	XHTML 1.1 Mobile	XHTML 2.0	(X)HTML 5.0	[B]lock(-ish)/[I]nline(-ish)/[T]able	[I]nvisible/[N]ormal/[R]eplaced	Semantic meaning	Usability & Accessibility	Best practice	SEO notes	Notable browser issues	Unstyled appearance

	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	I	N	(Line break)					Line break
<b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	I	N			May be only option for a WYSIWYG editor	May get a sligthly elevated rank		Bolder
<i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	I	N						Italics
<sub>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	I	N						Subscript
<sup>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	I	N		E.g. Use with simple math, footnotes, and when part of language idiom. (X)HTML 5 may get a special format for footnotes				Superscript
<big>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			I	N			Use CSS			Bigger
<small>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	I	N	("Smallprint" in (X)HTML 5)		Use CSS			Smaller
<tt>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					I	N			Use CSS			Fixed width font
<center>			👎	👎		👎	👎						B	N						Centers everything!
<font>	✓		👎	👎		👎	👎				♦		I	N			Use CSS. Only allowed for WYSIWYG tools in (X)HTML 5.			Changes font settings
<u>	✓		👎	👎		👎	👎						I	N			Use CSS			Underlined
<s>			👎	👎		👎	👎						I	N			Use CSS or <del>			Strike through
<strike>	✓		👎	👎		👎	👎						I	N						
<nobr>													I	N			Use CSS instead		NS 4 proprietary, but works in all	No line breaks in cell
<wbr>													I	N					MSIE proprietary	Suggestion for line break.

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Tables

Element	HTML 3.2	HTML 4.01 strict	HTML 4.01 transitional	HTML 4.01 frameset	XHTML 1.0 strict	XHTML 1.0 transitional	XHTML 1.0 frameset	XHTML 1.1	XHTML 1.1 Basic	XHTML 1.1 Mobile	XHTML 2.0	(X)HTML 5.0	[B]lock(-ish)/[I]nline(-ish)/[T]able	[I]nvisible/[N]ormal/[R]eplaced	Semantic meaning	Usability & Accessibility	Best practice	SEO notes	Notable browser issues	Unstyled appearance
\<table\>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	B	N	Tabular data	Describe format with "summary"	Not for layout			Visible borders
\<tr\>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	T	N	Table row					
\<th\>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	T	N	Heading for row or column	Use "scope" or "headers/id"				Table cell with bold, centered text
\<td\>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	T	N	Table data					A table cell
\<caption\>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	T	N	Table caption	Often a good idea to have			Hard to style	Centered above the table
\<thead\>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	T	N	Table head					
\<tbody\>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	T	N	Table body		Can be used instead of grouping \<tr\> with the class attribute		MSIE needs this one for dynamically created tables	
\<tfoot\>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	T	N	Table footer					
\<col\>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	T	I	Table column				MSIE catches too many style-rules!	
\<colgroup\>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	T	I	Group of columns				Safari does not support colgroup	

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Forms (& application-type elements)

Element	HTML 3.2	HTML 4.01 strict	HTML 4.01 transitional	HTML 4.01 frameset	XHTML 1.0 strict	XHTML 1.0 transitional	XHTML 1.0 frameset	XHTML 1.1	XHTML 1.1 Basic	XHTML 1.1 Mobile	XHTML 2.0	(X)HTML 5.0	[B]lock(-ish)/[I]nline(-ish)/[T]able	[I]nvisible/[N]ormal/[R]eplaced	Semantic meaning	Usability & Accessibility	Best practice	SEO notes	Notable browser issues	Unstyled appearance
<form>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	B	N	A form	Do not emulate links	Normally use the POST method	Spiders do not 'follow' forms		
<input>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	I	R	Input widget					Input widget
<label>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	I	N	Explanation for form-controls	(Almost) every form control should have a label. Significant increase of clickable area for checkboxes and radio buttons. Tip: add CSS-rule "cursor: pointer;"				
<textarea>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	I	R	Enter text					Textarea widget
<button>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	I	R	Flexible button	JS for progressive enhancement				Button widget
<fieldset>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	B	N	Group of form-elements	Logical groups of form controls increase usability				Border, maybe rounded corners
<legend>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	B	N	Heading for group of form elements	It might be repeated for each control in speech synthesis.				Text **in** the top border
<select>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	I	R	Multiple choice input			Menus done with select widgets will not be followed by spiders		Drop down list
<option>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		R						Item in such list
<optgroup>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		R		Used sensibly they help				Group of such items
<isindex>	✓		👎	👎		👎	👎							R			Precursor of form			A textfield between two <hr>

Web applications

Element	HTML 3.2	HTML 4.01 strict	HTML 4.01 transitional	HTML 4.01 frameset	XHTML 1.0 strict	XHTML 1.0 transitional	XHTML 1.0 frameset	XHTML 1.1	XHTML 1.1 Basic	XHTML 1.1 Mobile	XHTML 2.0	(X)HTML 5.0	[B]/[I]/[T]	[I]/[N]/[R]	Semantic meaning	Usability & Accessibility	Best practice	SEO notes	Notable browser issues	Unstyled appearance
<command>												✓	I	R	A command the user can invoke					
<datagrid>												✓	B	R	Interactive representation of tree, list, or tabular data					
<datalist>												✓	I		A list of suggested values for a form control. Use with <option>.					
<output>												✓	I		"Advisory or transient information..." (D. Goodman) "Considered to be a form control for the purposes of the DOM" (Spec)				Opera 9 is the first browser to support Web Forms 2.0, but that support is only preliminary. There are some JavaScript libraries that implement some functionality.	Unstyled text
<details>												✓	B	I/N/R	Additional information or controls which the user can obtain on demand					
<event-source>												✓	I		Open external URI or IRI as a stream and treat as event source					
<menu>	✓		👎	👎		👎	👎					✓	B	N	List of commands. Returns in (X)HTML 5, with a wider usage than pure navigation.					Like
<meter>												✓	B	R/N	A scalar measurement within a known range.					Not decided as of Jan -07
<progress>												✓	B	R/N	A progress bar. (Do not confuse with <meter>)					
<time>												✓	I	N	A date and/or time of day					

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Lists

Element	HTML 3.2	HTML 4.01 strict	HTML 4.01 transitional	HTML 4.01 frameset	XHTML 1.0 strict	XHTML 1.0 transitional	XHTML 1.0 frameset	XHTML 1.1	XHTML 1.1 Basic	XHTML 1.1 Mobile	XHTML 2.0	(X)HTML 5.0	[B]lock(-ish)/[I]nline(-ish)/[T]able	[I]nvisible/[N]ormal/[R]eplaced	Semantic meaning	Usability & Accessibility	Best practice	SEO notes	Notable browser issues	Unstyled appearance
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	B	N	Unordered list	Lists should be used as much as possible. Many things, e.g. Menus, are really lists. List are easy to scan and easy to see.	Do not use for indentation only			Bullet list, left indentation
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	B	N	Ordered list					Numbered list, left indentation
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	B	N	List item					Item in or
<dl>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	B	N	Definition list	W3C says use for dialogue and other not obvious purposes, others disagree.				
<dt>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	B	N	Definition term			Used for "define" commands in Google		
<dd>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	B	N	Definition data					40px left indentation
<di>											✓		B	N	Groups <dt> and <dd>					
<nl>											✓		B	N	Navigation list					
<nav>												✓	B	N	Navigation section	Not really a list. Put here for comparison with <nl>.				
<dir>	✓		👎	👎		👎	👎						B	N	Directory listing		Use or			Like

Coding & formulas

Element	HTML 3.2	HTML 4.01 strict	HTML 4.01 transitional	HTML 4.01 frameset	XHTML 1.0 strict	XHTML 1.0 transitional	XHTML 1.0 frameset	XHTML 1.1	XHTML 1.1 Basic	XHTML 1.1 Mobile	XHTML 2.0	(X)HTML 5.0	[B]lock(-ish)/[I]nline(-ish)/[T]able	[I]nvisible/[N]ormal/[R]eplaced	Semantic meaning	Usability & Accessibility	Best practice	SEO notes	Notable browser issues	Unstyled appearance
<code>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	I	N	Computer code	Use with CSS-rule: "white-space: pre;" or the pre element	Syntax highlight with CSS-classes			Monospaced
<var>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	I	N	Variable data		Not (only) a "variable" in programming			Italics
<kbd>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	I	N	Represents user input					Monospaced
<samp>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	I	N	Output from computer					Monospaced

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Objects, multimedia, etc.

Element	HTML 3.2	HTML 4.01 strict	HTML 4.01 transitional	HTML 4.01 frameset	XHTML 1.0 strict	XHTML 1.0 transitional	XHTML 1.0 frameset	XHTML 1.1	XHTML 1.1 Basic	XHTML 1.1 Mobile	XHTML 2.0	(X)HTML 5.0	[B]lock(-ish)/[I]nline(-ish)/[T]able	[I]nvisible/[N]ormal/[R]eplaced	Semantic meaning	Usability & Accessibility	Best practice	SEO notes	Notable browser issues	Unstyled appearance
`<img>`	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	I	R	Image	Do use the alt-attribute, but wisely	Use CSS for decorative images.	The alt attribute will be indexed for image searches		(An image)
`<object>`		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	B	R	(object that normally requires a plug in)		Use (X)HTML, CSS and DOM-scripts if possible.	Content in objects usually will not be indexed	Often bad support for fallback content. MSIE will treat as ActiveX.	(Animation, applet, etc)
`<param>`		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		I						
`<canvas>`												✓	B	R		Provide fallback content			Already supported by many, but not MSIE	Animation – blank until script starts drawing
`<embed>`												✓	B	R			Allowed in HTML 5, but still inferior to `<object>`			(Animation, video, sound)
`<noembed>`														I						(Fallback for embed)
`<audio>`												✓	I	R	Audio stream				Ogg, Vorbis and Theora must be supported. Apple likes QT, MSIE wma/wmv	Controls may be shown
`<video>`												✓	I	R	Video or movie					Video + controls may be shown
`<source>`												✓		I	Alternative formats for `<audio>` or `<video>`, where the UA chooses the best one					
`<applet>`	✓		👎	👎		👎	👎						B	R			Use `<object>`			Java applet
`<map>`	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			I		Avoid imagemaps! If you must have one, use the title attribute!				
`<area>`	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			I						
`<marquee>`													B	N		Avoid flickering	Do not use. Use unobtrusive DOM-scripts for behaviour.		MSIE proprietary, but supported by most	Scrolling text
`<blink>`													I	N		Avoid flickering			NS proprietary, works in Opera	Blinking text
`<bgsound>`														I		A nuisance!	Use the object element		MSIE proprietary	Plays a sound

Frames

Element	HTML 3.2	HTML 4.01 strict	HTML 4.01 transitional	HTML 4.01 frameset	XHTML 1.0 strict	XHTML 1.0 transitional	XHTML 1.0 frameset	XHTML 1.1	XHTML 1.1 Basic	XHTML 1.1 Mobile	XHTML 2.0	(X)HTML 5.0	[B]lock(-ish)/[I]nline(-ish)/[T]able	[I]nvisible/[N]ormal/[R]eplaced	Semantic meaning	Usability & Accessibility	Best practice	SEO notes	Notable browser issues	Unstyled appearance
`<frameset>`			✓			✓	✓				👎		B	N			Do not use frames! If you must, use the title attribute! Consider using `<object>` instead of iframe.			
`<frame>`			✓			✓	✓				👎		B	R						
`<iframe>`			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				✓	B	R	New nested browsing context			Only option for rich text editing in Gecko		
`<noframes>`			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			👎		B	I		Provide meaningful content and links to the framed content. Not "you need a better browser"!				

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All elements are sorted within their groups in prioritized order. Recommended (X)HTML versions are mint-colored.

Miscellaneous

Element	HTML 3.2	HTML 4.01 strict	HTML 4.01 transitional	HTML 4.01 frameset	XHTML 1.0 strict	XHTML 1.0 transitional	XHTML 1.0 frameset	XHTML 1.1	XHTML 1.1 Basic	XHTML 1.1 Mobile	XHTML 2.0	(X)HTML 5.0	[B]lock(-ish)/[I]nline(-ish)/[T]able	[I]nvisible/[N]ormal/[R]eplaced	Semantic meaning	Usability & Accessibility	Best practice	SEO notes	Notable browser issues	Unstyled appearance
`<bdo>`		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	I	N		Do think about i18n issues	Probably better to use CSS			
`<plaintext>`	☞												B	N	(Stop treat code as HTML)		Keep it forgotten! For some uses, see CDATA.		Used to be some, but who cares?	Monospaced
`<ruby>`								✓			✓	✓	I	N	Ruby overall container				MSIE 5+ is currently the only browser that has support for ruby, but it is not complete.	
`<rbc>`								✓			✓	✓	I	N	Ruby base container					
`<rtc>`								✓			✓	✓	I	N	Ruby text container					
`<rb>`								✓			✓	✓	I	N	Ruby base					
`<rt>`								✓			✓	✓	I	N	Ruby text					
`<rp>`								✓			✓	✓	I	N	Denotes "fallback" characters for ruby					

Uncommon proprietary elements

Element	HTML 3.2	HTML 4.01 strict	HTML 4.01 transitional	HTML 4.01 frameset	XHTML 1.0 strict	XHTML 1.0 transitional	XHTML 1.0 frameset	XHTML 1.1	XHTML 1.1 Basic	XHTML 1.1 Mobile	XHTML 2.0	(X)HTML 5.0	[B]lock(-ish)/[I]nline(-ish)/[T]able	[I]nvisible/[N]ormal/[R]eplaced	Semantic meaning	Usability & Accessibility	Best practice	SEO notes	Notable browser issues	Unstyled appearance
`<layer>`													B	N	(DHTML layer + fallback)	DHTML era practices stink!	Forget these! There never will be a situation where they will solve any real problem.		NS 4 proprietary, not supported by any other browser	
`<nolayer>`													B	I						
`<ilayer>`													I		(inline layer)					Like iframe
`<comment>`														I	(Alternative to `<!-- -->`)				MSIE proprietary, contents will be shown in other browsers but Opera!	
`<xml>`													B		(XML data island)				MSIE only	
`<keygen>`															(Key for form encryption)				NS 3 proprietary, works in Gecko and Opera	Selectable list of key sizes.
`<multicol>`																	CSS 3 will have columns		NS 3 and 4 proprietary	Renders content in evenly spaced columns
`<spacer>`													I	N			Use CSS			Like a spacer gif

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Table column headers (diagonal):
HTML 3.2 · HTML 4.01 strict · HTML 4.01 transitional · HTML 4.01 frameset · XHTML 1.0 strict · XHTML 1.0 transitional · XHTML 1.0 frameset · XHTML 1.1 · XHTML 1.1 Basic · XHTML 1.1 Mobile · XHTML 2.0 · (X)HTML 5.0 · [B]lock(-ish)/[I]nline(-ish)/[T]able · [I]nvisible/[N]ormal/[R]eplaced · Semantic meaning · Usability & Accessibility · Best practice · SEO notes · Notable browser issues · Unstyled appearance

Official information:

HTML 2.0 spec	http://ftp.ics.uci.edu/pub/ietf/html/rfc1866.txt
HTML 3.2 spec	http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-html32
HTML 4.01 tags	http://www.w3.org/TR/1999/REC-html401-19991224/index/elements.html
XHTML 1.0	http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/
XHTML 1.1	http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml11/
XHTML basic	http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml-basic/
XHTML Mobile	http://www.openmobilealliance.org/
XHMTL 2.0 tags	http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml2/elements.html
(X)HTML 5.0	http://whatwg.org/specs/web-apps/current-work/
Web Forms 2.0	http://www.whatwg.org/specs/web-forms/current-work/
Ruby annotations	http://www.w3.org/TR/ruby/ (not included in table above)
XHTML Print	http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml-print/ (not included in table above)
Xframes	http://www.w3.org/TR/xframes/

Key and explanations

✓	In standard
☞	Deprecated or discouraged = Do not use!
✍	Will maybe be in (X)HTML 5, but not yet documented.
♦	Sometimes available depending upon serialization or other factors.

Block(-ish)/Inline(-ish)/Table refers to default CSS rendering
Normal/Invisible/Replaced also refers to CSS treatment of the element

Useful links

www.triin.net/temp/html-elements.html
meiert.com/en/indices/html-elements/
simon.html5.org/html5-elements
www.w3.org/2007/07/xhtml-basic-ref.html
dev.w3.org/html5/html4-differences/Overview.html

Background and intended use

The recommendations in the table above represents the personal opinion of Lars Gunther, although valuable suggestions have been provided by April Siegfried, Christian Montoya, Alexey Feldgendler and Simon Pieters. This list is intended to be used as a reference while coding (or seeing other's code) and as notes for learning (X)HTML. Strict doctypes that are supported by the browsers of today is recommended for normal web pages. XHTML 1.1 Mobile is recommended for pages primarily intended for cell phones and similar devices (WAP 2.0). Proprietary elements are included for reference if stumbled upon. A few XHTML 2.0 and most (X)HTML 5 elements are included as examples of where (X)HTML might be heading in the future.

Book references

Dynamic HTML: The definitive reference, Third Edition, by Danny Goodman. Sebastopol, CA, USA: O'Reilly Media, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-596-52740-2

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Column headers (diagonal):
HTML 3.2 | HTML 4.01 strict | HTML 4.01 transitional | HTML 4.01 frameset | XHTML 1.0 strict | XHTML 1.0 transitional | XHTML 1.0 frameset | XHTML 1.1 | XHTML 1.1 Basic | XHTML 1.1 Mobile | XHTML 2.0 | (X)HTML 5.0 | [**B**]lock(-ish)/[**I**]nline(-ish)/[**T**]able | [**I**]nvisible/[**N**]ormal/[**R**]eplaced | Semantic meaning | Usability & Accessibility | Best practice | SEO notes | Notable browser issues | Unstyled appearance

HTML 3.0 elements not in table above

Some might be revived in XHTML 5!
http://friendlybit.com/html/forgotten-html-elements/
http://www.w3.org/MarkUp/html3/

http://www.w3.org/MarkUp/html3/

Element	Description
<abbrev>	Turned into abbr
<app>	Synonym for applet
<au>	Synonym for <author>
<author>	"Author"
<banner>	Special element for ads (+ some more uses)! "Should not scroll". Today: position: fixed;
<bg>	Sort of like blockquote
<credit>	Who is quoted with <bg> or who has made an image shown with <fig>
<fig>	*Advanced alternative to img. Revived (in changed form) in (X)HTML 5 as <figure>*
<fn>	*Footnote. May be revived in (X)HTML 5.*
<hp1><hp2>etc	*Highlight text in a browser-specified way. Sort of revived as <m> in (X)HTML 5*
<lang>	Language
<lh>	List header
<math>	Equation or formula (had lots of sub-elements)
<nextid>	Deprecated already by RFC 1866 (5.2.6) but actually supported by MSIE 4+ (sic!)
<note>	*Explanatory note outside of text flow. May be revived in (X)HTML 5*
<overlay>	Used with fig
<person>	Signifies that it is a name
<range>	Defines a range within the document
<spot>	The spot tag can be used to specify a location in the document where there is no tag.
<tab>	Tabulator

Last update

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XHTML 2.0 elements not in table above

Structural module	***Xforms module***
Blockcode	Action
Separator	Delete
Accessibilty module	Dispatch
Access	Group
Text module	Load
L (line of text)	Message
List module	Model
Di (defintion item)	Output
Events module	Range
ev:listener	Rebuild
Handler module	Recalculate
Handler	Refresh
Object Module	Repeat
Standby	Reset
Tables	Revalidate
Summary	Secret
Xframes	Select1
Frames	Send
Group	Setfocus
	Setindex
	Setvalue
	Submit
	Switch
	Trigger
	Upload

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