

# HTML CODE FOR BEGINNERS

## How to build a SIMPLE HTML page in a text file

*#1 Rule to remember: If you open a code bracket...most of the time you have to close it. An open bracket=`<` A closed bracket=`>`*

*#2 Rule: Always put your parameters within quotes. Anytime you use a bit of code and need to set variables for it always use quotes after the = sign.*

*#3 Rule: Save your text file with the .html file extension instead of .txt. To check your work, open the file with your web browser. To do that, left click on the file on your hard drive and click 'open with' and choose your browser instead of a text editor. (Do this in reverse if you want to open an HTML file in a text editor.) If you'd like to check your work as you go, save the file, then hit refresh in the browser to see your changes.*

Okay, let's start building a page...here's how you start:

**<HTML>** - This goes at the top of your page and tells the server to load a HTML page. Remember, it goes at the very top of your document.

**<HEAD>** - This is the second line of code to appear on the page. After this goes two meta tags about who and what created the document. Not important or necessary, so we'll skip them.

What IS important are the two lines of code that comes after the who and what meta tags:

**<meta name="Description" content="Home page of author Rebecca Vinyard. Visit this site to get her latest book news.">** - What is this? This is the meta tag for SITE DESCRIPTION. Meta tags are picked up by spidering search engines. You should ALWAYS include a meta tag for site description in your HEAD section.

**<meta name="KeyWords" content="Rebecca Vinyard, Romance Author, Destiny's Dreamers, Awakening, Sinful Rain, The Pickpocket, The Romance Writer's Handbook, Romance Central, Awe-Stuck eBooks, The Writer Books">** - What is this? This is the meta tag for KEY WORDS. Again, search engines pick up on your keywords. But don't get carried away with your key words. Some search engines only pick up on the first 25 or so. And if you repeat key words, some engines interpret that as spamming and will toss you out. So pick your key words with care.

**<title>Author Rebecca Vinyard</title>** - This is the Title that will appear at the very top of the page in the browser.

**</HEAD>** - This means we are finished with the head section (see? closed bracket!) and are ready to start working on the body of our web page. Guess what the next bit of code is called?

**<BODY>** - If you leave this tag like just like this, the background color, font, and link colors will show up as the browser's default settings. So most of the time, you're going to want to customize your body's parameters. Here's how you do that:

**<body text="WHITE" bgcolor="BLACK" link="GREEN" vlink="PURPLE" alink="BLUE" background="mybackground.jpg">** OR  
**<body text="#FFFFFF" bgcolor="#000000" link="#00C400" vlink="#150185" alink="#0000FF" background="mybackground.jpg">** - Either one of these will give your page the same result; a black background with white text, green links, purple visited links, blue active links and wallpaper that is tiled from the image 'mybackground.jpg'. Most browsers will recognize the names of simple colors. Blue, Yellow, Red, etc. Notice how each parameter is set within quotes. ALWAYS SET YOUR PARAMETERS BETWEEN QUOTES.

But to get subtle color shadings, you use what is called hexadecimal color codes or hex codes for short. Want to find a specific color? Google hex codes and you'll find dozens of sites that have gizmos that will figure the hex code for you. OR if you use a graphics program (WHICH YOU REALLY NEED IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE CREATING YOUR OWN SITE), you can use the color picker to tell you the hex code...which is what I just did, except for black and white, because c'mon, six Fs and six zeros are easy to remember.

The last bit "mybackground.jpg" will create a wallpaper for your page based on a graphic. The graphic will tile, so you need a background graphic that will tile seamlessly if you want it to look good. BUT... you could always just go with a plain color background. In the case of the example above, all you'll need to do delete the background variable from the code.

**Now we're ready to start adding content to your page. Let's start with page and paragraph format.**

**<CENTER>** - The default alignment for web browsers is left. Use this tag when you want your text or images centered in the page. To un-center your text use: **</CENTER>**

**<DIV align="right">** Use this if you want your page aligned on the right hand side. You can also use this for centering or aligning to the left, but since there's the simple **<CENTER>** tag for centering and the default is left anyway, I only use this for right alignment. To make it stop with the right alignment, all you have to do is close it. **</DIV>**

**<UL>**- This bit of code works as an indent from the left side of the page. Helpful if use an image background that has a border on it. Sometimes, you need more than one UL tag to get the text off of your border. Remember though, when you

are finished using the indent, then close the bracket</UL> If you use it multiple times, then you need to close it multiple times.

**<BR>** - This is used for when you need a line break. If you want a double space, then use <BR><BR>

You do NOT have to use a close bracket for line breaks.

**<P>** This code bit can also deliver a double line break, but in some browsers not...so I usually go with <BR>. Also, if you start a paragraph with <P>, then remember to close it with </P>

### **Now let's talk fonts.**

**<FONT FACE="arial">** - Use if you want to set a specific font. To make it go away...</FONT>

**<FONT SIZE="-2">** - Use if you want to set a specific font size. Warning, not all browser read font size parameters the same. To end it </FONT>

**<FONT COLOR="BLUE">** Use if you want to set a specific font color. Again, you can use hex codes instead of the simple color names if you want. To make the blue disappear </FONT>

**<I>** Use if you want your font to appear in italics. Close with </I>

**<B>** or **<STRONG>** - Use if you want to BOLD your font. Close with </B> or </STRONG>

**<U>** - use to underline your font. Close with </U>

You need to close each font tag your open, so lets say you set the font face, size and color. When you're done, you need to use </FONT> for each one you used so it would look like </FONT></FONT></FONT> on your page.

### **Ready to add some graphics?**

*#1 rule about graphics. If you want them to show up, they MUST be loaded onto the server along with your web page.*

*#2 rule about graphics. If you keep all your graphics in a separate directory, then you MUST supply the URL to that directory on the server. For graphics that are loaded in the same directory as the HTML page, you need only enter the graphic's name and file extension as shown below.*

*#3 rule about graphics. Browsers can only read graphics with .jpg .gif or .png file extensions. Do NOT try to load .bmp or .tif images onto a web page.*

**<IMG SRC="mycover.jpg">** Okay, this is how you begin to add a graphic to your page. With this basic code, what you'll get is a image that is aligned however the page or text is currently aligned. If your text is currently centered, the graphic will be centered. And any text you add after it will line up with the bottom of the picture and right up slap next to it. Not good if you want to put your book info next to a big cover image.

So in that case, you might want to set specific parameters for your image...btw, different web editors might enter the parameters in different ways. So if you see something slightly different than this code in your web editor, don't freak out.

```
<img SRC="mycover.jpg" ALT="COVER TITLE" HSPACE="20" VSPACE="5" height="261" width="200" align="LEFT">
```

Okay, let's analyze all these parameters and what they do.

ALT= What this does is provide alternate text for the image. If a person should mouse over the graphic, then this text will pop up.

HSPACE= or VSPACE= These two parameters set the distance of the image from the text or other images around it. Pages and images are measured in pixels in HTML. So HSPACE=20 means any text or image horizontally next to it will be spaced 20 pixels away. VSPACE=5 means any text or image vertically next to the text will be spaced at five pixels away. You can play with the pixel space numbers until you get the spacing you want.

Height= and Width= These parameters tell the browser the height and width of your graphic, which helps the browser load the image faster. Some people often use these parameters to make big graphics show up smaller on the page. **DON'T DO THAT.** If you want your graphic to be a specific size, then downsize it in your graphics program. Yeah, you can set that big 1050 pixel graphic down to 150 pixels, but it's still going to be the same **FILE SIZE** and will take much **LONGER** to load than if you simply downsize the graphic itself. So be nice to your visitors. Always have your graphics made to the size you want them to be.

align="LEFT" or align="RIGHT" Either of these will make the graphic move to the specified side of the page **AND** will allow you to have your text run next to it (spaced away from the image by whatever hspace and vspace parameters you set).

align="CENTER" will center the graphic in the middle of the page. Any accompanying text will appear at the bottom of the image.

align="MIDDLE" will center **YOUR** text in the middle of the graphic for one line only. If you go over one line of text, the second line will appear beneath the image. This one is useful for when you are using graphics for bullet points for instance.

Back to rule #2. If your graphic is located in a different directory or a different site than your HTML page, then you **HAVE** to give the full URL to the graphic. Examples: <IMG SRC="/images/mycover.jpg"> (use when it's on a different directory on **YOUR** site) OR <IMG SRC="http://someothersite.com/mycover.jpg"> (use if your graphic is on **ANOTHER** site or you can give it the full URL from

YOUR site too. Sometimes, that's necessary on some servers.) Then set your parameters as demonstrated above. This also applies to your page's background graphic (remember up in the BODY section?).

## CREATING LINKS

**To create a text link**, your code will look like this: `<a href="http://yourpage.com/">Link Text Goes Here </a>`

**To create a linked image**, your code will look like this: `<a href="http://yourpage.com/"><IMG SRC="/images/mycover.jpg"></a>`

When you link an image, a little link colored square will appear around it. Not a problem with square images, but for all others, you might want the border to go away. To do that, add this to your image parameters. `<IMG SRC="/images/mycover.jpg" border="0">` When the border parameter is set to 0, the link square will go away. But let's say you want a bigger border. Then replace the 0 with the number of pixels you want the border size to be.

**To create an email link**: `<a href="mailto:youremail@yourisp.com"> Email me!</a>` If you'd like a specific subject line in the emails, then use this parameter: `<a href="mailto:youremail@yourisp.com" subject="Thanks for Emailing Me!">` (Does not work in all browsers.)

**If you would like your link to open a new window** to the new page, then add this parameter to your link:

`<a href="http://yourpage.com/" target="new">Link text goes here</a>`

### Other useful codes:

**<HR>** - this will create a line divider across your page. If you want the line to look bigger, then you can add a size parameter, example: `<HR SIZE="3">`

**<li>** - this will give you a bullet point.

**<BLOCKQUOTE>** - does what it says, creates a block quote. Make it stop with `</BLOCKQUOTE>`

**When you are FINISHED with your page, use these two closing tags:**

`</BODY>`

`</HTML>`

This tells the browser the page is done. Nothing else for it to look for.

With this info, you can create a simple web page in a text editor. Remember to save your text file with a .html extension. You can also use .htm, but if it's your

INDEX page, it's best to use .HTML

What is an INDEX page? The index page is the default page for your site. It's the first one that loads when a visitor types in your URL. Most servers have their site defaults set for index.html

If for some reason your web editor saves it with the extension .htm, don't worry. The server will look for .htm next, then .shtml...and so on. Or you could just rename it to a .html extension.

## **SLIGHTLY ADVANCED, BUT WHAT THE HEY**

**Tables** - You might want to use tables for a variety of reasons...to organize sections of your page...to organize images or text into columns and rows...whatever. It's not that hard to build a simple table though, so I'm including this info with this guide.

<TABLE> - this tells the browser you are sticking in a table here.

<TD> - table columns.

<TR> - table rows

Just like with images, you can set the parameters for your tables. Here's an example:

<table CELLPACING=10 CELLPADDING=10 COLS=2 WIDTH="80%" > - In this example, this tells the browser that anything within the cells in the table should be spaced 10 pixels away from the dividing line and to add an additional 10 pixels of space between the cells. It also tells the browser to divide the table into two columns. The last parameter WIDTH="80" tells the browser that the table should span 80% of the page. You can also set the table width in pixels should you so desire. If you do not set a width parameter, then the table will expand to accomodate the size the text and/or images inside it.

Let's say you are making a simple two-columned, two-rowed table with just pictures in it and you want the dividing lines to show. This will give you four squares. And the code looks like this:

```
<table border="1">
<tr><td>(image code here)</td><td>(another image here)</td></tr>
<tr><td>(image code here)</td><td>(another image here)</td></tr></table>
```

You can set other parameters using the same html codes you use for page layouts and alignments for your table or your table's cells... like alignments or background and font colors. Don't be afraid to play around with the parameters.