

**NOTE: This is a computer lab lesson. Please make sure you have signed up for the lab in advance.**

TITLE OF LESSON

English 1 Unit 2 Lesson 13 – HTML and The Autobiography

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TIME ESTIMATE FOR THIS LESSON

One or two class periods

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ALIGNMENT WITH STANDARDS

Preparation for California – Eng 9-10: W1.8

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MATERIALS

**HTML Examples** – Student Page  
Computer  
Text Editing Program (a simple one)  
Web Browser  
Internet Connection

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LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To effectively use View Source in a web browser to explore the HTML that goes into a web page
- To be able to create a simple web page independently
- To be able to use the FIND command in their web browser
- To be able to construct a simple HTML document
- To understand ESCAPE CHARACTERS and the fundamentals of HTML TAGS

Prerequisite Skills:

- coverage of the INTRODUCTION (**HTML Lecture 1**)
  - use of a text editor like Simpletext on the Mac or NotePad on Windows, OR the ability to save a document as TEXT ONLY from a full-featured word processor
  - navigation of a file tree or hierarchy (i.e. moving between folders on the disk to open or save things)
  - the ability to save a document in a folder or on a floppy disk
  - the ability to comfortably switch back and forth between open applications
  - the ability to copy and paste text between programs
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EXPLANATION OF LESSON

You should explain to the students that this is the beginning of their HTML authoring careers. Some of your students may be familiar with HTML authoring tools like Microsoft FrontPage, Claris Homepage, Adobe PageMill or Macromedia Dreamweaver. They will probably offer some type of complaint regarding doing the HTML “by hand.” You should explain to students that the authoring tools are very powerful. But if the user does not have a clear knowledge of exactly what the tool is automating or making easier, they will never be able to exploit the full power of the tool.

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FOCUS AND MOTIVATE STUDENTS – WARM UP ACTIVITY

- 1) Homework Check – Stamp/initial complete homework assignments. Pass back graded assignments and have students place them in the appropriate section of their folders. If you have graded their autobiographical incidents, wait until the Lesson 15 to pass them back.
- 2) **Agenda/Daily Log** – Have students copy the agenda you have written on the front board.
- 3) Computer Protocol – If you are in the computer lab today, remind students of the computer lab etiquette you have established for your classes and the consequences for any misbehavior.
- 4) The Hook and X-Ray Vision – The first thing students will do is go to their favorite web site and tear the skin off of it, revealing the raw code underneath. You may want to preview or discuss with students what are appropriate web sites for them to be working on at school prior to allowing them to go to their favorite website. Then you will definitely want to monitor who is logging on to which website. Make sure to walk around the room during this portion of the lesson and make clear the consequences for looking at inappropriate sites. This could be a very simple consequence like calling home and meeting with the principal.
- 5) Reveal the Code – To reveal the raw code of their favorite site, have them go to the site of their choice and select Page Source from the View menu in Netscape (In Internet Explorer, they will go to View and select Source). The browser will open up another window and display a storm of text, interspersed with colored HTML tags. If the site the student is on is mostly text, it will be relatively easy to see how the HTML operates. However, if the page makes use of frames, tables, and imagery, the HTML will probably be more dense and harder to understand. Try to cultivate a spirit of adventure while the students are doing this. Explain to them that they are literally revealing the skeleton of the web pages in this warm-up and that what they are doing will work for any page, anywhere on the web from the FBI to their favorite pop group.
- 6) Discuss – As you patrol the class, making sure that students are doing the work, talk about how one cannot “view source” on a television show, movie or radio broadcast—in other words, how something is done in other media is not made immediately available. The web is fundamentally different because one *can* view the source code, copy what one likes and use it in one’s own pages. A good deal of the popular web is built from “sampled HTML” not unlike contemporary music that employs pieces of already-existing recordings.
- 7) Finding Tags – Have the students use the FIND command of their browsers (EDIT>FIND) and search for the following HTML tags:

<HTML>  
<HEAD>  
<TITLE>  
<BODY>  
<IMG>  
<FONT>

Explain the following: the FIND command is incredibly useful. They should understand that the FIND in their browser is different from the FIND of their operating system. FIND in a web browser only looks for text on the currently viewed page, where FIND in an operating system (like MacOS or Windows) searches for files on the hard drive.

- 8) Discuss – Verbally, have the students offer brief explanations of what they think each tag does in HTML. Repeat their answers as they come up, asking for some kids to echo them. What you are trying to do is get a general foundation of what the tags do as the students recognize them. This should take about fifteen minutes as it will take them a while to settle on a web page that they consider to be their “favorite” and they will no doubt be tempted into a sidetrack discussion of the content of the site and not its construction. In this case, when they start focusing on a site, begin asking them what they like about it and guide them into using VIEW>SOURCE. Make sure they notice the differences between the viewed HTML and its source (e.g. there are NO images when you view source, the FONTS are all the same when you view source, even if there are several when viewed normally). Try to get them amazed at how a bunch of complicated half-English becomes **mtv.com**.

**Note: The Instructor should be intimately familiar with the content of the activities in the following section. Walk through the lesson prior to class (with your site technology person if you do not feel comfortable doing it alone).**

1. Naked HTML – Now that you've seen the difference between the HTML in its uninterpreted form (through VIEW SOURCE) and its interpreted form (without VIEW SOURCE), how can we create a web page that displays its own contents? Can we create a web page that is simultaneously interpreted and not interpreted? Let's try.

When doing any kind of writing, hooks are the things that get the reader interested in what is being written. In HTML, the hooks are the TAGS that are woven through the text to be displayed in a browser. Admittedly, an HTML tag like <CENTER> is not as exciting as leading someone into a description of your first kiss, but it works the same way when trying to structure the overall narrative.

The first hook tag in an HTML document is the <HTML> tag. All other text and tags are between <HTML> and </HTML>. Note the '/' character in the second tag. This lets the browser know that it should stop interpreting the tag. Since formally there shouldn't be anything before or after the <HTML> tag, this fundamental hook defines where your document begins and ends.

2. Escape Characters – Type the following into a text document and save it (in text-only format) as **auto.html**.  
<HTML>  
</HTML>  
Nothing shows up in your browser.

Try typing the following (don't forget to re-save **auto.html**):

```
<HTML>  
<HTML>  
</HTML>  
</HTML>
```

Nothing shows up in your browser now either. Why?

To make a browser show the characters it has been told to ignore, gators for example, you need to use an **escape character** to display special characters. The escape character for greater than and less than are:

```
> &gt;  
< &lt;  
& &amp;
```

You may notice that we refer to the special display codes as escape **characters** and wonder why there is actually more than one letter making up the code—you might think it should be called an escape word or something. The ampersand (shift-7) is actually the escape character and the letters following them make up the code. There are tons of HTML escape codes for making things like accents over letters for languages like Spanish, German and French. Bookmark or take note of the following site, which documents all of HTML's escape and special characters:

<http://developer.netscape.com/docs/manuals/htmlguid/tags22.htm#1838455>

3. An HTML Autobiography – So how would you make the first version of **auto.html** show its own code? Try putting the following between the <HTML> and </HTML> tags:  
&lt;HTML&gt;  
&lt;/HTML&gt;  
Notice that how even without the <HTML> tags, the browser will still display your text. Though technically not necessary, it is considered polite and good HTML style to include the begin/end HTML tags.

The second major HTML hooks are the <HEAD> and <BODY> tags. The <HEAD> tags hold information that the viewer never really sees, like Javascript and indexes that help search engines find web pages. The most basic use of the <HEAD> tag is to change the name of the window that a web page appears in, and it is dependent on another tag called <TITLE>.

So a page that looked like this:

```
<HTML>  
<HEAD><TITLE>An HTML Autobiography</TITLE></HEAD>  
</HTML>
```

Would look like what? Try it and see, save it as **auto2.html**. Try leaving off the `</TITLE>` tag and see what happens. Garbage, right? See how important closing your tags is?

4. The `<BODY>` Tag And Other Basics – Now, onto the `<BODY>` tag. The `<BODY>` tag lets you do things like set the overall background color of a web page as well as the color of its text and links. In the following example the background color is black, but you can change this to tons of other colors, many that you can simply guess, like white, yellow, blue. There are many other colors that can be displayed just by knowing the name of the color.

Go here for more colors: <http://developer.netscape.com/docs/manuals/htmlguid/colortab.htm>

Modify **auto2.html** as follows (use one of the colors from the website mentioned above to change your background and text color), save it and reload the page in your browser.

```
<HTML>
<HEAD><TITLE>HTML Autobiography</TITLE></HEAD>
<BODY bgcolor="black" text="white">
This is an HTML Autobiography.<BR>
By M. Web Browser & H. Teemell
</BODY>
</HTML>
```

Note the new tag, `<BR>` which makes any text that comes after it start on the next line. This is called a *line break* and is just like hitting return on your keyboard while you're typing. Without the `<BR>` tag, text will simply “wrap” and automatically start on the next line, *depending on how wide the browser window is*. Since there is no “beginning” or “end” of a line break, `<BR>` is a solo tag that does not have a closing version. Technically, the web page you've created isn't an autobiography at all because it doesn't tell you how the web page was constructed.

5. Web Page Creation – Your goal for the rest of the class is to create a web page that displays the HTML featured above (with the background color and text color of your choice). It will require clever use of escape characters you have learned while building **auto.html**.
6. Save – Make sure to stop students five minutes before the bell to have them save their work. Depending upon your computers and their networking and server abilities, you may want to have students save to individual disks that you keep with their names clearly marked on them or that they keep. Either way, you will want to make sure you agree upon what they will be calling this web page prior to saving it. And you will need to have access to it in order to give them a grade for their work for the day. Make sure students are aware you will be collecting this and that they will be receiving a grade for it.
7. Clean Up – Have students shut down their computers, clean up their workstations, and push in their chairs. Collect work. Review homework.

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#### HOMEWORK

None

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#### GROUP ROLES

None

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#### DOCUMENTATION FOR PORTFOLIO

##### Unit 1

Final Exam Unit 1  
Hero Myth  
Trickster Myth  
Monster Myth  
Creation Myth

##### Unit 2

Autobiographical Incident 1  
Autobiographical Incident 2