

Lesson 4: Format text with HTML tags

Modern web pages usually use CSS to format text rather than HTML tags, but it's possible to perform basic text formatting without needing to use CSS at all. You'll learn about HTML's formatting tags in this lesson and will learn about CSS later in the course.

1. Open a new Notepad document.

If you already have a document open in Notepad you can create a new one by clicking *File > New* or pressing the *Ctrl+N* keyboard shortcut.

2. Save the new document as: **Lesson4.html**
3. Add the framework of an HTML document and some text.

Add the following HTML code

```
<html>
  <head></head>
  <body>
    I think, therefore I am.
  </body>
</html>
```

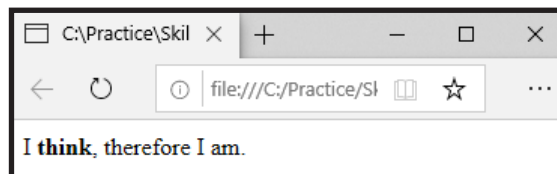
4. Use the `` tag to make the word *think* bold.

The `` tag makes any text inside it **bold**.

1. Edit the HTML to:

```
<html>
  <head></head>
  <body>
    I <b>think</b>, therefore I am.
  </body>
</html>
```

2. Save your work and open *Lesson4.html* in your web browser.



All text within the `` tag is now shown in bold.

5. Use the `<i>` tag to make the word *am* italic.

Do this in exactly the same way as you did with the `` tag, placing `<i>` and `</i>` tags around the word *am*.

All text within an `<i>` tag is shown in *italic*.

6. Use the `<u>` tag to make all of the text underlined.

note

`` and ``

As well as `` and `<i>`, HTML also supports the `` and `` tags. If you try these you'll find that `` seems to do exactly the same thing as `<i>` and `` seems to do exactly the same thing as ``.

The difference between the tags is that `<i>` specifically means that the text should be italic, while `` simply means that the text should be emphasized in some way.

The major web browsers tend to interpret the tags to mean exactly the same thing, but some other software may treat them differently, especially screen reader and text-to-voice programs.

note

Heading tags

HTML offers a series of “heading” tags, including `<h1>`, `<h2>`, `<h3>`, `<h4>`, `<h5>` and `<h6>`. These are used to define ‘headings’, with H1 being the most important and H6 being the least important.

If you try these tags you’ll find that text inside the H1 tag is the largest and each subsequent heading is smaller.

As well as affecting text size, headings tags are also believed to affect search engine results. It’s often advised to place the most important keywords on the page inside `<h1>` tags so that search engines will give them priority.

Although this advice is often given, it’s unclear whether it is effective. Search engines do not explain how their algorithms work, so advice given on ‘search engine optimization’ is often unreliable.

The final code should look like this:

```
<html>
  <head></head>
  <body>
    <u>I <b>think</b>, therefore I <i>am</i>.</u>
  </body>
</html>
```

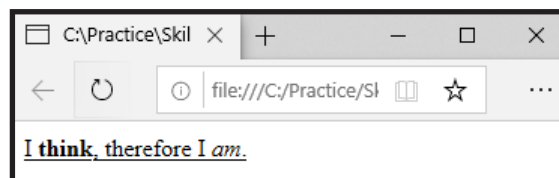
Now all of the text is inside your `<u>` tag, including your `` and `<i>` tags.

The word *think* will be both bold and underlined because it is inside both a `<u>` tag and a `` tag.

The word *am* will be both italic and underlined because it is inside both a `<u>` tag and an `<i>` tag.

Placing tags inside each other in this way is known as *nesting* and it’s something you’ll do all the time in HTML code.

7. Save your changes and view *Lesson4.html* in your web browser.



As expected, all of the text is underlined, with the word *think* shown in bold and the word *am* shown in italics.

There are many other HTML tags that can be used to format text in different ways, but most are rarely used on modern web pages. Modern versions of HTML support CSS (*Cascading Style Sheets*), which offers a more flexible way to format text and other page elements and has largely replaced most of the HTML formatting tags.

If you’re interested in the other tags available you can find a complete list of HTML tags in the appendix at the end of this book.