



The W3C's online HTML validator can be found at validator.w3.org.

Validating documents

Just as text documents may contain spelling and grammar errors, HTML documents may contain various errors that prevent them from conforming to the specification rules. In order to verify that an HTML document does indeed conform to the rules of its specified document type declaration it can be tested by a validator tool. Only HTML documents that pass the validation test successfully are sure to be valid documents.

Web browsers make no attempt at validation so it is well worth verifying every HTML document with a validator tool before it is published, even when the content looks fine in your web browser. When the browser encounters HTML errors it will make a guess at what is intended – but different browsers can make different interpretations so may display the document incorrectly. Conversely, valid HTML documents should always appear correctly in any standards-compliant browser.

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) provide a free online validator tool that checks the syntax of web documents:

- 1 With an Internet connection, open your web browser and navigate to the W3C Validator Tool at validator.w3.org then click on the “Validate by File Upload” tab

Hot tip



Other tabs in the validator allow you to enter the web address of an HTML document located on a web server to “Validate by URI” or copy’n’paste all code from a document to “Validate by Direct Input”.

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- 2 Click the “Browse” button then navigate to the HTML document you wish to validate – once selected its local path appears in the validator’s “File” field
- 3 Next click the validator’s “Check” button to upload a copy of the HTML document and run the validation test – the result will then be displayed

Don't forget



Notice that the validator automatically detects the document's character set and HTML version.

The screenshot shows the W3C Markup Validation Service interface. At the top, it says "W3C® Markup Validation Service" and "Check the markup (HTML, XHTML, ...) of Web documents". Below this, there are links for "Jump To: Notes and Potential Issues" and "Congratulations · Icons". A green banner states "This document was successfully checked as HTML5!". The "Result:" is "Passed". The "File:" field shows the path "C:\Users\Mike\Desktop\hello.html" with a "Browse..." button. Below the file field, there is a note: "Use the file selection box above if you wish to re-validate the uploaded file hello.html". The "Encoding:" is "utf-8" with a dropdown menu set to "(detect automatically)". The "Doctype:" is "HTML5" with a dropdown menu set to "(detect automatically)". The "Root Element:" is "html".

If validation fails the errors are listed so you may easily correct them. When validation succeeds you may choose to include an icon at the end of the document demonstrating HTML5 support:

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar containing "hello.html" and a tab titled "Getting Started With HTML5". The main content area displays "Hello World!" in a large, bold font. Below the text is the HTML5 logo, which consists of the word "HTML" above a stylized orange and red "5" inside a shield-like shape.

Hot tip



The HTML5 support logo is available in several sizes and formats – find more details online at w3.org/html/logo.