**Anatomy of a HTML5 page**

Lets look under the hood on an HTML5 document and get an idea of the basic parts of a web page and how they function together. As you read the page, follow along by opening a Google Chrome browser. In the menu bar go to View/Developer/View Source.

**Doctype**

The very first thing that you typically see in an HTML file is the DOCTYPE declaration. Before HTML5, this could be a very confusing bit of code that looked something like this:



There’s a lot going on here and every bit of it speaks the web browser, the reader or both. There are several DOCTYPEs to choose from, which can be monumentally confusing for new developers.

**The HTML5 Doctype**

Fortunately, HTML5 completely simplifies the situation with a refreshingly simple DOCTYPE:



Now we’ve seen what a DOCTYPE *looks like* but we haven’t really discussed what it *does*. The DOCTYPE tells the browser which type of HTML to expect, which in turn affects how the browser renders the page. So it’s like an introduction, telling the browser what’s coming next.

**Root Element**

After the DOCTYPE, the HTML code really begins. If your entire HTML is a tree, this is the root from which everything else sprouts.

The Root Element is defined by a “HTML” tag.



Notice that the root element includes a language attribute, in our case English (”e”).

**Head Element**

The next thing you’ll encounter in an HTML document is the “head” section.



The stuff that goes into the head section is primarily informational, it tells both you and the browser certain things about the page such as the title, the charset, background color etc.

This is also where you traditionally load in important external resources.

There are a few important things that go into a head tag. Let’s look at them one by one.

**Meta Tags**

As you can probably guess, meta tags hold metadata about the page. Metadata takes many forms and can include keywords, authors, descriptions, etc.

**Charset**

This is pretty boring stuff, the charset essentially tells the browser which character encoding to use. Below is a typical charset declaration in HTML5.



Some other typical metatags include description and author. Here’s a quick, self-explanatory example of each of these:

**Description**



**Author**



**Title**

Another thing that goes inside the head portion of your document is the title tag. This is a very simple piece of code that simply states whatever you’d like the title of the page to be. Here’s an example:



This title is usually shown to the user at the very top center of the browser window, on a tab, etc.

**Links and Scripts**

The last thing we’ll discuss regarding the head tag is the inclusion of external resources. In a very simple web page, you’ll typically see these take the form of a stylesheet or script:



**Body Element**

The final portion of an HTML page is the most important. Everything inside of the body element defines the content and structure of your page. This is where images are placed and the “look: of the page is defined.



**Putting it All Together**

Now that we’ve walked through each individual piece of an HTML file, let’s put it all together into one extremely basic HTML5 template.



A thousand apologies for the mundane nature of this topic - hang in there.

All of these pieces were necessary to accurately paint the picture of how a HTML document operates and what it actually looks like “under the hood’.

The basic structure of an HTML document is referred to as the DOM, or the Document Object Model. This is almost always metaphorically referred to as a tree and depicted like image below.

