

What are XHTML Links?

What makes the World Wide Web a "web" are the links that connect Web Pages to other files across the Internet. The ability to create hyperlinks is very fundamental and not too complicated. The true power of the Web rests in this one tag. A text hyperlink is a section of text that is surrounded by a link tag. An image may be turned into a link to another file as well. In both cases clicking on the link will take the user to the destination of the link.

The destination of the link will be determined by you in your code, and can point to files on your Web site, or other files on the World Wide Web, or even other places in the page that you are on. We will see in this lesson how this is done.

The Anchor Tag

The first thing we have to look at is the tag that does all of this for us. It is called the anchor tag and looks like this:

```
<a href="http://www.google.ca"> This is a link </a>
```

Will display like this:

[This is a link](http://www.google.ca)

It looks kind of boring right now, but trust me when I say that this is going to be a very important tool in your XHTML kit. If we dissect the above code, we get 4 distinct parts:

The <a> tag - The tag that is used to create a hyperlink

The href attribute - This attribute stands for hyperlink reference. It tells the browser that you are about to provide the URL that it should go to.

The URL (<http://www.google.ca>) - The address that the browser will go to.

The linked text (This is a link) - This could be any text, but whatever is in this area will show up on the page. This is what your users will click.

It is important to remember that the anchor tag is a text-level element, so it can be applied to small sections of text without forcing it to break to a new line. You have already seen the code to make an entire selection into a link. Here is how you can apply it to a very small selection of text.

```
<p> This is a paragraph of text and none of it is linked except for this one piece of the <a href="http://www.google.ca">here</a> </p>
```

This displays a whole paragraph of text, with only one piece as the link.

This is a paragraph of text and none of it is linked except for this one piece of the paragraph [here](#)

The Title Attribute

Although it is not a requirement, it is suggested that you use the **title=""** attribute with your links. This creates a messages box when you hover over the link that gives your users an idea of where the link will take them before they go there.

This is a big help to them and can save them a lot of time and effort. The code below demonstrates the use of the title attribute:

```
<p> This is a paragraph of text and none of it is linked except for this one piece of the <a href="http://www.google.ca" title="A Link To Google Search Engine">here</a> </p>
```

When the user hovers over the linked text the hint will appear as seen below:

This is a paragraph of text and none of it is linked except for this one piece of the paragraph [here](#)

A Link To The Google Search Engine

The Target Attribute

This attribute is meant to tell the browser how to open the new page that you are linking to. The default setting is to have the requested page, load in the window that you call it from (**target="_self"**).

If you want, you can change this so that the requested page loads in a new tab or window (**target="_blank"**). This is helpful when you want to show your users something, but you don't want them to lose their place on your Web site.

```
<p> This is a paragraph of text and none of it is linked except for this one piece of  
the <a href="http://www.google.ca" title="A Link To Google Search Engine"  
target="_blank">here</a></p>
```

*****IMPORTANT*****

You should always use `_blank` when creating a link that will take the user away from your site. This way they do not lose their place when they want to come back to your site. Also, do not use `_blank` to send the user to one of your own pages (in the same site). This will result in the user having too many windows open.

Absolute vs. Relative Links

Up until now we have been using absolute links. Absolute links are used to direct users to a place outside of your website so it requires the use of a full website address.

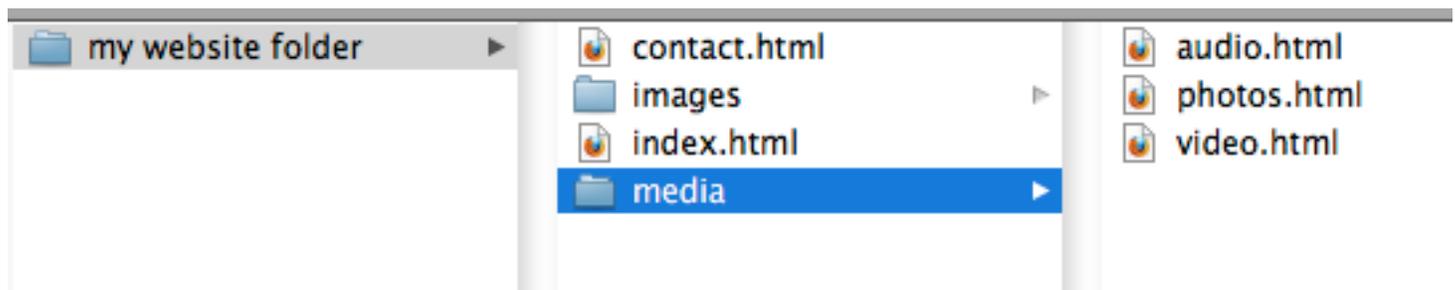
```
<p> This is a paragraph of text and none of it is linked except for this one piece of  
the <a href="http://www.google.ca" title="A Link To Google Search Engine"  
target="_blank">here</a></p>
```

If you would like to direct the user to a place in your own site, you do not need to use a full URL. Instead you would use a relative link.

Relative Links

This type of link can only be used when directing the user to another page in your own site. Because the browser already knows where you are in the site, you only need to tell it the path necessary to get to the page you want your user to go to. We've actually used these before. Remember [images/photo.jpg](#) ?

Let's work on some scenarios. Let's assume that you have your website folder set up as seen below:



Scenario 1: If you are working on the **index.html** page and you would like to create a link to the **contact.html** page, you need only write the file name. This is because the two files are in the same folder together.

```
<a href="contact.html">A link to our contact page</a>
```

Scenario 2: If you are working on the **index.html** page and you would like to create a link to the **video.html** page, you need to give instructions that say to go into the media folder and find the file. We use a slash (/) to do this.

```
<a href="media/video.html">A link to our video page</a>
```

Scenario 3: If you are working on the **audio.html** page and you would like to create a link to the **index.html** page, you need to give instructions that say to get out of the media folder and find the file. For this we put two dots in front of a slash (../) to do this.

```
<a href="../index.html">A link to our home page</a>
```

Using Links to Launch Files

One last thing to note, you can also use links to give your users access to files from your website. In fact, when you clicked on this lesson on my website, it launched a .pdf file didn't it? All you have to do is use a regular link, but instead of directing it to an html file, you choose another file that you have on your site.

For example:

```
<a href=" tests/testprep1.pdf " >Test Prep 1 </a>
```