Stages in Learning HTML

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Section A. Introduction to HTML

HTML stands for 'HyperText Markup Language’. This is the language that tells your computer how to construct a web page so it can be viewed. The page itself arrives as a simple text file. Your web browser has to interpret the meaning of this text, so that it can display the page as it was designed to be seen. Pictures, movies and sounds are not part of the HTML, but separate files called upon by the web page. The HTML simply shows how to set these objects out.

HTML makes use of tags. Most HTML tags tell the web browser when to start formatting in a certain style, and then when to stop using that style. For example, to produce the bold, italic text ‘This is HTML’ on your page, you would use the following code:

```
Code       Tag name    Instruction to browser
<b>        Bold         - start using bold type
<i>        Italic       - start using italic type
This is HTML Slash italic - write the text
</i>        Slash italic - stop using italic type
</b>        Slash bold   - stop using bold type
```

The tags are the things in brackets. `<b>` is the tag that instructs the web browser to use bold text. `</i>` is the tag that tells it to stop using italic text. The code for this text may all be written on one line:

```
<b><i>This is HTML</i></b>
```

Despite the fact that HTML has been regularly standardised (agreements made about which tags should be used and what they should do), a web page can still vary greatly when viewed using different browsers. A web page designed exclusively for viewing with Internet Explorer, may appear differently when viewed with Netscape Navigator (some parts may not appear at all). A professional web designer has to take account of the different web browsers when constructing a page.

Some points about HTML

1. Design applications such as FrontPage 2000 are very useful for building web pages in WYSIWYG view (what you see is what you get – or ‘design view’). However, there are still a multitude of occasions when it is necessary to understand and reorganise the HTML. Learning HTML is a very useful exercise.

2. HTML can be written in **UPPER**, or **lower** case text.

3. Web browsers will ignore tags they do not understand (e.g. Netscape will ignore tags that have been introduced for use with Internet Explorer, but which have not been standardised).

4. HTML is not a programming language. Mistakes will not cause your computer to crash – they will just cause the page to look wrong.

5. Users can set their own preferences regarding text sizes, link colours and whether or not to display pictures. They also have different browsers, platforms and screen sizes. The task of a web designer is usually to design pages that are acceptable to as many people as possible. For example, you should not spend time trying to write text that exactly fits across your screen – it is very unlikely to appear as you planned on different computers.

6. Tags should not be interlaced. i.e. for the **bold, italic type** above, we used the code:

```
<b><i>This is HTML</i></b>
```

rather than:

```
<b><i>This is HTML</i></b>
```

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Section G. Adding hyperlinks

You can link to other pages using the following hyperlink tags:

- `<a href="homepage.htm"></a>` - links to a page in the same folder
- `<a href="http://www.boo.com"></a>` - links to another website

If you have placed pages in folders within your website, you will need to use these attributes:

- `<a href="friends/paul.htm"></a>` - links to the page “paul.htm” in a folder named “friends”
- `<a href="../homepage.htm"></a>` - links from the page “paul.htm” back to the homepage

You can also link to another place in the same page using these tags:

- `<a name="Info"></a>` - sets a target called “Info” in the page
- `<a href="#Info"></a>` - links to the target called “Info”

You may also want a hyperlink that will allow people to send an email to you.

- `<a href="mailto:jo@mail.com"></a>` - opens an email addressed to jo@mail.com

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**Task 1**

**a.** Create and save a page called “HomePage.htm”.

**b.** Open a second page. Save as “SecondPage.htm”. Type the following code between the body tags:

```html
<a href="homepage.htm">1. Click here to visit our homepage</a>
<p><a href="mailto:me@mail.com">2. Click here to send me an email</a></p>
<p><a href="#Bottom">3. Click here to go to the bottom of this page</a></p>
<table height="800">
<tr>
<td>Spacing table only</td>
</tr>
</table>
<p><a name="Bottom">Bottom of this page</a></p>
```

**c.** View the page in your browser. Scroll down the page so you are aware of its content.

**d.** Click on each link and write down what happens.

i. _______________________________________________________________________________
ii. _______________________________________________________________________________
iii. _______________________________________________________________________________

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**Task 2**

**a.** Create a new folder within your website. Create a new page and save it inside the folder. Name the new page “FolderPage.htm”

**b.** Create a link from “HomePage.htm” to “FolderPage.htm” (use the tags shown at the top of this page). Test the link in your browser.

**c.** Create a link from “FolderPage.htm” back to “HomePage.htm”. Test the link in your browser.