

3. Basic Syntax

Nearly all Markdown applications support the basic syntax outlined in John Gruber’s original design document. There are minor variations and discrepancies between Markdown processors — those are noted inline wherever possible.



Using Markdown doesn’t mean that you can’t also use HTML. You can add HTML tags to any Markdown file. This is helpful if you prefer certain HTML tags to Markdown syntax. For example, some people find that it’s easier to use HTML tags for images.

Headings

To create a heading, add number signs (#) in front of a word or phrase. The number of number signs you use should correspond to the heading level. For example, to create a heading level three (<h3>), use three number signs (e.g., `### My Header`).

Markdown	HTML
<code># Heading level 1</code>	<code><h1>Heading level 1</h1></code>
<code>## Heading level 2</code>	<code><h2>Heading level 2</h2></code>
<code>### Heading level 3</code>	<code><h3>Heading level 3</h3></code>
<code>#### Heading level 4</code>	<code><h4>Heading level 4</h4></code>
<code>##### Heading level 5</code>	<code><h5>Heading level 5</h5></code>
<code>##### Heading level 6</code>	<code><h6>Heading level 6</h6></code>

Alternate Syntax

Alternatively, on the line below the text, add any number of == characters for heading level 1 or -- characters for heading level 2.

Markdown	HTML
Heading level 1 =====	<code><h1>Heading level 1</h1></code>
Heading level 2 -----	<code><h2>Heading level 2</h2></code>

Paragraphs

To create paragraphs, use a blank line to separate one or more lines of text. You should not indent paragraphs with spaces or tabs.

Markdown

```
1 I really like using Markdown.
2
3 I think I'll use it from now on.
```

HTML

```
1 <p>I really like using Markdown.</p>
2
3 <p>I think I'll use it from now on.</p>
```

The rendered output looks like this:

I really like using Markdown.

I think I'll use it from now on.

Line Breaks

To create a line break (`
`), end a line with two or more spaces, and then type return.

Markdown

```
1 This is the first line.  
2 And this is the second line.
```

HTML

```
1 <p>This is the first line.<br />  
2 And this is the second line.</p>
```

The rendered output looks like this:

This is the first line.
And this is the second line.

Emphasis

You can add emphasis by making text bold or italic.

Bold

To bold text, add two asterisks or underscores before and after a word or phrase. To bold the middle of a word for emphasis, add two asterisks without spaces around the letters.

Markdown

```
1 I love bold text.  
2  
3 I love bold text.  
4  
5 Loveisbold
```

The HTML output of the first two examples is the same.

HTML

```
1 I love <strong>bold text</strong>.  
2  
3 Love<strong>is</strong>bold
```

The rendered output looks like this:

I love **bold text**.

Love**is**bold

Italic

To italicize text, add one asterisk or underscore before and after a word or phrase. To italicize the middle of a word for emphasis, add one asterisk without spaces around the letters.

Markdown

```
1 The *cat's meow*.  
2  
3 The _cat's meow_.  
4  
5 A*cat*meow
```

The HTML output of the first two examples is the same.

HTML

```
1 The <em>cat's meow</em>.  
2  
3 A<em>cat</em>meow
```

The rendered output looks like this:

The *cat's meow*.

*A*catmeow

Bold and Italic

To emphasize text with bold and italics at the same time, add three asterisks or underscores before and after a word or phrase.

Markdown

```
1 ***Important*** text.  
2  
3 ___Important___ text.  
4  
5 __*Important*__ text.  
6  
7 **_Important_** text.
```

The HTML output of all four examples is the same.

HTML

```
1 <strong><em>Important</em></strong> text.
```

The rendered output looks like this:

Important text.

Blockquotes

To create a blockquote, add a > in front of a paragraph.

Markdown

```
1 > Dorothy followed her through many rooms.
```

HTML

```
1 <blockquote>
2   <p>Dorothy followed her through many rooms.</p>
3 </blockquote>
```

The rendered output looks like this:

Dorothy followed her through many rooms.

Blockquotes with Multiple Paragraphs

Blockquotes can contain multiple paragraphs. Add a > on the blank lines between the paragraphs.

Markdown

```
1 > This the first paragraph.
2 >
3 > And this is the second paragraph.
```

HTML

```
1 <blockquote>
2   <p>This the first paragraph.</p>
3   <p>And this is the second paragraph.</p>
4 </blockquote>
```

The rendered output looks like this:

This the first paragraph.

And this is the second paragraph.

Nested Blockquotes

Blockquotes can be nested. Add a >> in front of the paragraph you want to nest.

Markdown

```

1 > This the first paragraph.
2 >
3 >> And this is the nested paragraph.

```

HTML

```

1 <blockquote>
2   <p>This the first paragraph.</p>
3   <blockquote>
4     <p>And this is the nested paragraph.</p>
5   </blockquote>
6 </blockquote>

```

The rendered output looks like this:

This the first paragraph.

And this is the nested paragraph.

Blockquotes with Other Elements

Blockquotes can contain other Markdown formatted elements. Not all elements can be used — you'll need to experiment to see which ones work.

Markdown

```

1 > ##### The quarterly results look great!
2 >
3 > - Revenue was off the chart.
4 > - Profits were higher than ever.
5 >
6 > *Everything* is going **well**.
```

HTML

```
1 <blockquote>
2   <h5>The quarterly results look great!</h5>
3   <ul>
4     <li>Revenue was off the chart.</li>
5     <li>Profits were higher than ever.</li>
6   </ul>
7   <p><em>Everything</em> is going <strong>well</strong>.</p>
8 </blockquote>
```

The rendered output looks like this:

The quarterly results look great!

- Revenue was off the chart.
- Profits were higher than ever.

Everything is going **well**.

Lists

You can organize items into ordered and unordered lists.

Ordered Lists

To create an ordered list, add line items with numbers followed by periods. The numbers don't have to be in numerical order, but the list should start with the number one.

Markdown

```
1 1. First item
2 2. Second item
3 3. Third item
4 4. Fourth item
5
6 1. First item
7 1. Second item
8 1. Third item
9 1. Fourth item
10
11 1. First item
12 8. Second item
13 3. Third item
14 5. Fourth item
```

The HTML output of all three example lists is the same.

HTML

```
1 <ol>
2   <li>First item</li>
3   <li>Second item</li>
4   <li>Third item</li>
5   <li>Fourth item</li>
6 </ol>
```

The rendered output looks like this:

1. First item
2. Second item
3. Third item
4. Fourth item

Nesting List Items

To nest line items in an ordered list, indent the items four spaces or one tab.

Markdown

```
1 1. First item
2 2. Second item
3 3. Third item
4   1. Indented item
5   2. Indented item
6 4. Fourth item
```

HTML

```
1 <ol>
2   <li>First item</li>
3   <li>Second item</li>
4   <li>Third item
5     <ol>
6       <li>Indented item</li>
7       <li>Indented item</li>
8     </ol>
9   </li>
10  <li>Fourth item</li>
11 </ol>
```

The rendered output looks like this:

1. First item
2. Second item
3. Third item
 1. Indented item
 2. Indented item
4. Fourth item

Unordered Lists

To create an unordered list, add dashes (-), asterisks (*), or plus signs (+) in front of line items.