

E-COURSE REVIEWS

Choosing the right introductory HTML course can be confusing. For example, users need to understand why HTML exists in different versions. One of the courses we reviewed instructs in HTML 3.2, while the others use HTML 4.0. You'll need to define your audience before choosing a course.

So you can get a feel for the differences between course formats and the types of available content, we've compared four popular introductory HTML courses. If you only want to get your toes wet, you might choose something inexpensive. If you aspire to become a hard-core Web developer, you can mix and match from among these options.

This sampling is rated on a five-star scale. Five-star courses are the best e-learning has to offer; one-star courses waste your time and money. The prices listed are for individual users; corporate pricing is available in most cases.

Happy coding!

Highly recommended

★★★★1/2 *HTML Fundamentals 1*: 15 hours, US\$325 for 6 months of course access. Publisher: DigitalThink

DigitalThink delivers comprehensive beginning HTML instruction in a supportive, interactive learning environment. This course is expensive, but the extra money is a worthwhile investment when you consider that you'll come away with real HTML production experience. The course works well either as a stand-alone experience or within DigitalThink's HTML programming series.

Recommended

★★★ *Programming in HTML*: 2 to 4 hours, US\$54.95 for 6 months of course access. Publisher: Learn2.com

This course provides an introduction to HTML 4.0 for users looking to get started in Internet publishing. Essentially an online video, *Programming in HTML* teaches in a simple and easy-to-understand format, but don't expect to become actively engaged.

Adequate

★★1/2 *HTML 4.0 Fundamentals*: 6 to 8 hours, US\$149.95 for 1 year of course access. Publisher: NETg

NETg's *HTML 4.0 Fundamentals* can be summed up as a long online lecture covering basic HTML 4.0 production. Interactivity is negligible. The practice exercises, which take place in a simulated editing environment that uses simulated browser previews, are ineffective. The course's main strengths are its thorough pre- and post-

HTML at a Glance

HTML Fundamentals 1: This highly interactive course has a clear presentation style, offers good support, and runs on several operating systems. One negative: It requires users to work in a program application loaded on their computers.

Programming in HTML: This course covers the basics and offers enough detail to help new users create simple Webpages. However, it lacks interactivity and an accessible table of contents.

HTML 4.0 Fundamentals: This course is a comprehensive overview of HTML 4.0. Although the assessment tools are excellent, it lacks interactivity and uses an unappealing interface.

HTML 4.0 Programming: Introduction: Little time is required for the amount of information covered in this course, which lacks interactivity and strong assessments. Also, its exercises don't test your comprehension of new material.

assessments, which uncover skills that need work. The assessments are the most interactive part of the course, so you may choose to take the assessment but learn the skills in another course.

★★ *HTML 4.0 Programming: Introduction*: 3 to 4 hours, US\$599 for 1 year of course access to Element K's Computer Professional Library. Publisher: Element K

In just three or four hours, this tutorial provides a good overview of beginning HTML 4.0 production techniques. A lot of material is covered, but the simulated learning environment offers few opportunities for worthwhile practice. We recommend that you try some of your new skills in your own text editor as you go through the course.

Also, you can skip the pre-assessment because some questions don't function properly, and you won't receive feedback on individual items. The same is true for the postassessment, which simply repeats the previous questions.

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