

Block vs. inline level elements

Nearly all HTML elements are either block or inline elements. The characteristics of block elements include:

- Always begin on a new line
- Height, line-height and top and bottom margins can be manipulated
- Width defaults to 100% of their containing element, unless a width is specified

Examples of block elements include `<div>`, `<p>`, `<h1>`, `<form>`, `` and ``. Inline elements on the other hand have the opposite characteristics:

- Begin on the same line
- Height, line-height and top and bottom margins can't be changed
- Width is as long as the text/image and can't be manipulated

Examples of inline elements include ``, `<a>`, `<label>`, `<input>`, ``, `` and ``.

To change an element's status you can use `display: inline` or `display: block`. But what's the point of changing an element from being block to inline, or vice-versa? Well, at first it may seem like you might hardly ever use this, but in actual fact this is a very powerful technique, which you can use any time you want to:

- Have an inline element start on a new line
- Have a block element start on the same line
- Control the width of an inline element (particularly useful for navigation links)
- Manipulate the height of an inline element
- Set a background colour as wide as the text for block elements, without having to specify a width