

PHP Syntax

Summary: in this lesson, you'll learn basic PHP syntax, including case sensitivity, statements, and whitespaces.

As a programming language, PHP has a set of rules that governs how you write programs.

PHP code

Like HTML, you need to have the opening tag to start PHP code:

```
<?php
```

If you mix PHP code with HTML, you need to have the enclosing tag:

```
?>
```

For example:

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html lang="en">
<head>
  <meta charset="UTF-8">
  <title>PHP Syntax</title>
</head>
<body>
  <h1><?php echo 'PHP Syntax'; ?></h1>
</body>
</html>
```

However, if a file contains only PHP code, the enclosing tag is optional:

```
<?php
echo 'PHP Syntax';
```

Case sensitivity

PHP is **partially** case-sensitive. Knowing what are case sensitive and what is not is very important to avoid syntax errors.

If you have a function such as `count`, you can use it as `COUNT`. It would work properly.

The following are case-insensitive in PHP:

- PHP constructs such as [if](#), [if-else](#), [if-elseif](#), [switch](#), [while](#), [do-while](#), etc.
- Keywords such as `true` and `false`.
- [User-defined function](#) & [class names](#).

On the other hand, [variables](#) are case-sensitive.

e.g., `$message` and `$MESSAGE` are different variables.

Statements

A PHP script typically consists of one or more statements. A statement is a code that does something, e.g., assigning a value to a variable and calling a function.

A statement always ends with a semicolon (;). The following shows a statement that assigns a literal string to the `$message` variable:

```
$message = "Hello";
```

Code language: PHP (php)

The above example is a simple statement. PHP also has a compound statement that consists of one or more simple statements. A compound statement uses curly braces to mark a block of code. For example:

```
if( $is_new_user ) {  
    send_welcome_email();  
}
```

Code language: PHP (php)

You don't need to place the semicolon after the curly brace (}).

The closing tag of a PHP block (`?>`) automatically implies a semicolon (`;`). Therefore, you don't need to place a semicolon in the last statement in a PHP block. For example:

```
<?php echo $name ?>
```

Code language: HTML, XML (xml)

In this example, the statement `echo $name` doesn't need a semicolon. However, using a semicolon for the last statement in a block should work fine. For example:

```
<?php echo $name; ?>
```

Code language: HTML, XML (xml)

Note that it's OK if the code may not make any sense to you now because you'll learn more about them in the upcoming tutorial.

Whitespace & line breaks

In most cases, whitespace and line breaks don't have special meaning in PHP. Therefore, you can place a statement in one line or span it across multiple lines.

For example, the following code snippets are equivalent:

```
login( $username, $password );
```

Code language: PHP (php)

And:

```
login(  
    $username,  
    $password  
);
```

Code language: PHP (php)

Summary

- PHP is partially case-sensitive.
- PHP constructs, function names, class names are case-insensitive, whereas variables are case-sensitive.

- A statement ends with a semicolon (;).
- Whitespace and line breaks don't matter in PHP; do leverage them to make the code more readable.