

Tables

“How do I get two or more columns of text (or pictures) side-by-side on my Web page?”

There are several ways to do this. Some people will suggest things called frames. The problem with frames is that they don't look the same on all browsers, and they're messy; the contents of each frame have to be saved as a separate file. The tidier solution (which is also easier to program) is to use **tables**.

Table tags

Tables use the following tags:

Beginning tag	End tag	Function (what they do)
<code><table></code>	<code></table></code>	Mark the beginning and end of a table
<code><tr></code>	<code></tr></code>	Mark the start and stop of a row in your table
<code><td></code>	<code></td></code>	Mark the beginning and end of an item of data [a cell] within a row of your table

How do they work?

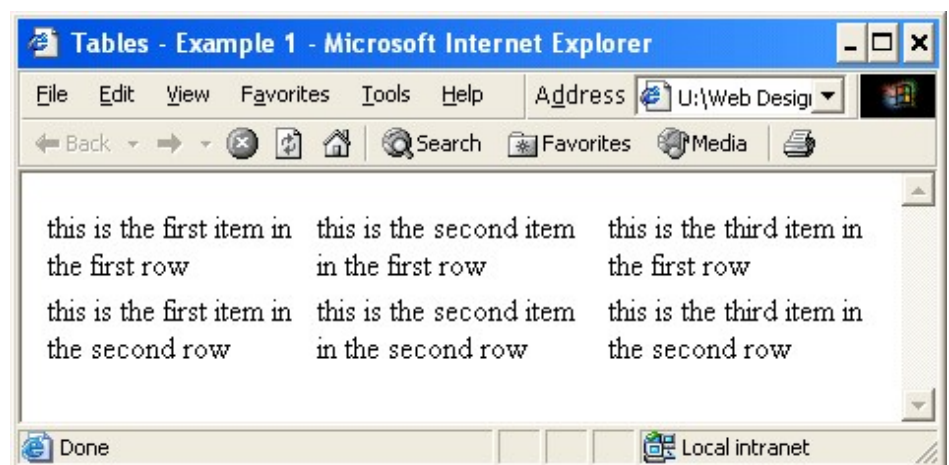
Let's look at a couple of tables from a Web site:

```
<table>
  <tr>
    <td>this is the first item in the first row</td>
    <td>this is the second item in the first row</td>
    <td>this is the third item in the first row</td>
  </tr>
  <tr>
    <td>this is the first item in the second row</td>
    <td>this is the second item in the second row</td>
    <td>this is the third item in the second row</td>
  </tr>
</table>
```

The example on the right shows how this will look in a browser window.

It works, but it looks a bit “clunky”.

We can also change the **spacing between the cells**, and the **cell borders** (whether they have lines around them or not).



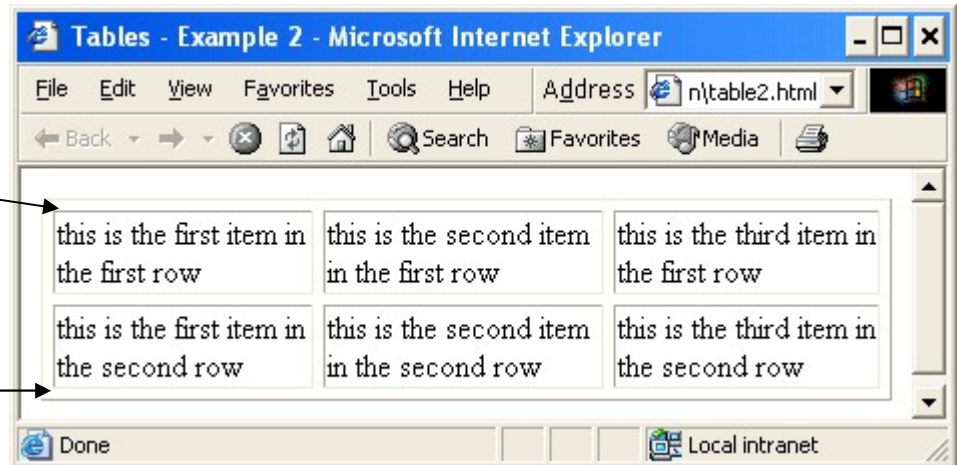
We can change the `border` and `cellspacing` values in our initial `<table>` tag:

```
<table border=1 cellspacing=5>
```

This means a border line 1 pixel wide (the finest width) with a spacing of 5 pixels between the cells. This will make Example 1 look like Example 2 (below):

This example the use of `border` (changes the thickness of the lines around the cells):

and `cellspacing` (the width of the gap between the cells):



If we do not specify any values, the default is `border=0` (no border) `cellspacing=2` (cells quite close together, like Example 1).

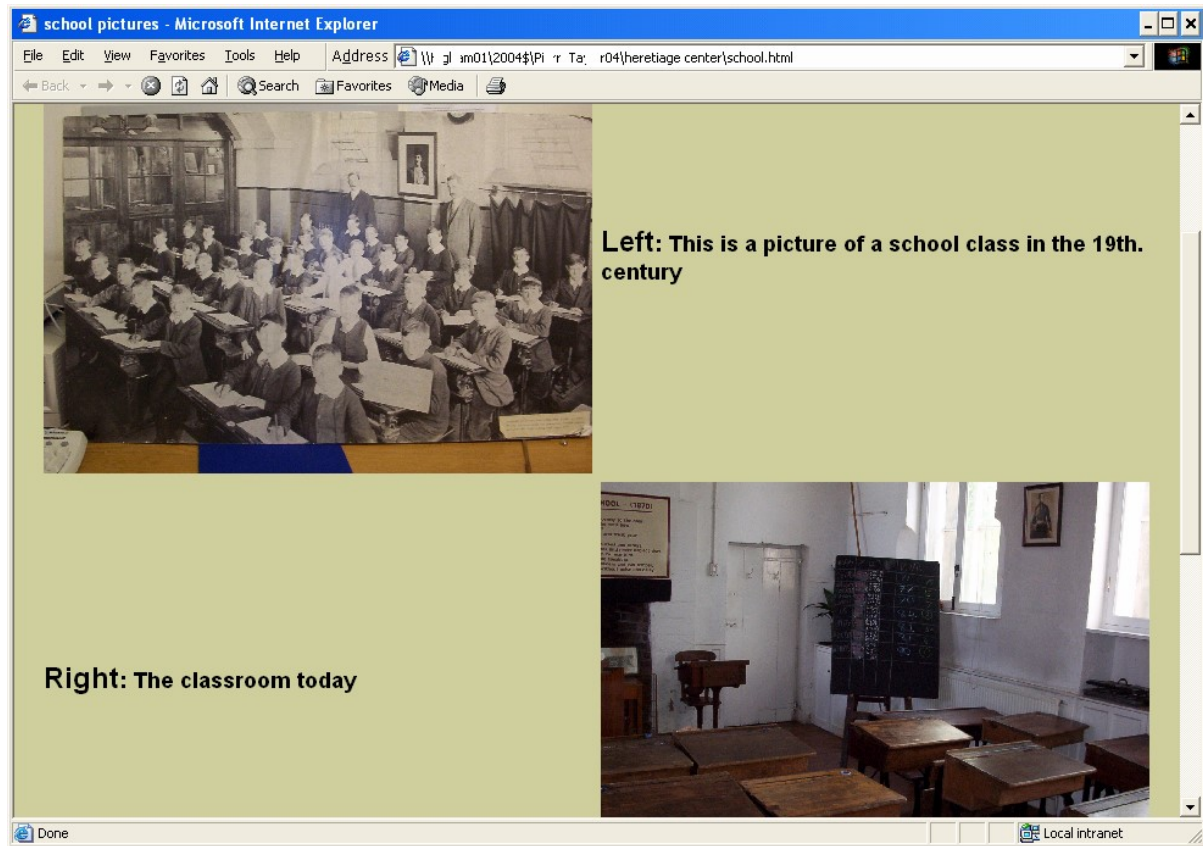
Pictures in tables

We can also put pictures in tables, so that we might put words beside them, and explain what the pictures are. Here is an example of a student's work from a Web Design Club I ran at a school a few years ago:

```
<table align=center cellspacing=5 width=75%>
<tr>
  <td></td>
  <td><H3><big>Left</big>: This is a picture of a school
class in the 19th. century</H3></td>
</tr>
<tr>
  <td><h3><big>Right</big>: The classroom today</h3></td>
  <td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
  <td></td>
  <td><H3><big>Left</big>: School rules in 1870 </H3></td>
</tr>
</table>
```

On the next page, you'll see how that table fitted into a page on a project that became a real Web site:

How it looked:



The example above shows part of the student's work when displayed in the Web browser.

Note how the text becomes centred vertically in each table cell, thanks to the use of `align=center` in the `<table>` command.

Notice how the student has also adjusted both table width and image width to make sure the page looks attractive in a reasonably-sized browser window.

This was the work of a Year 7 student after seven or eight weekly web design club meetings.

After a term or so, that club (about 6 or 8 students) had produced a Web site for a local Heritage Centre, which remained the centre's official web site for several years. The page above became part of that site.

Over to you

Let's see where Web design can take you.

Have fun experimenting with tables; there's a lot more you can do with them, from arranging an online display of your art and craft work to presenting the scores of your local football league.

Stay safe, happy HTML-writing – and see you next time.