

The Markdown Cheat Sheet

WebsiteSetup.org · Plain-text formatting that turns into HTML

Basic syntax

Works in nearly every Markdown tool, from strict parsers to note apps.

Element	You type	You get
Heading 1 to 6	# H1 ... ##### H6	Headings, level 1 to 6
Bold	**text**	Bold text
Italic	<i>*text*</i>	Italic text
Bold and italic	***text***	Both at once
Blockquote	> quote	Quote block
Ordered list	1. First	Numbered list
Unordered list	- item	Bulleted list
Nested list	- item then indent 2 to 4 spaces	Indented sub-list
Inline link	[text](https://url)	Clickable link
Image	![alt](image.jpg)	Image
Inline code	`code`	Monospace code
Horizontal rule	---	Horizontal line
Line break	two trailing spaces or \	New line in paragraph
Paragraph	a blank line between blocks	Separate paragraphs

Extended syntax (GFM)

GitHub Flavored Markdown adds these on top of CommonMark.

Element	You type	You get
Table	A B then :-- --:	Aligned columns
Task list	- [] to do /- [x] done	Checkboxes
Strikethrough	~~text~~	Struck-through text
Fenced code	```js ... ```	Highlighted block
Footnote	note[^1] then [^1]: text	Linked footnote
Autolink	https://example.com	Clickable bare URL
Reference link	[text][id] then [id]: https://url	Clickable link

A fenced code block

```
```js
function greet(name) {
 return "Hi, " + name;
}
```
```

Markdown flavors

CommonMark: the strict spec. No tables, task lists, strikethrough, or autolinks.

GFM: a strict superset of CommonMark. Adds tables, task lists, strikethrough, autolinks, and syntax highlighting. Powers GitHub and GitLab READMEs.

Chat tools: basic subsets only. Slack, Discord, and Reddit differ. Note: Slack uses `*single asterisks*` for bold.

Editors and generators: Obsidian and Notion are GFM-like. Hugo, Jekyll, and Astro vary by parser.

Markdown in WordPress

WordPress does not parse Markdown by default. Use the Jetpack Markdown block (a CommonMark parser), the Jetpack Markdown module for the classic editor, or a Markdown plugin. The block editor's typing shortcuts (type `##` then space, or `-` for a list) look like Markdown but are not: they trigger live as you type and are not stored as Markdown.

Common gotchas

- A GFM table shows as raw pipes in a strict CommonMark renderer.
- Raw HTML is allowed in most Markdown; GFM strips dangerous tags.
- Nested lists need consistent 2 or 4 space indentation.
- A hard line break needs two trailing spaces (invisible) or a backslash.
- Underscores mid-word (`s_nake_c_a_s_e`) can trigger italics: escape them or use backticks.
- Many parsers need a blank line before a list, heading, or blockquote.