

Frames and Framesets

A frameset is a collection of several frames that together make up a web page. Each region of the screen is a frame that is described by a HTML file. There is also an extra HTML file that defines the frameset by listing the file names of the other frames.

Before we start this exercise, rename your index.html file to index_save.html.

First, we will create the frame set and initial frames.

1. From the opening dialog or from the File | New dialog, select “Frameset”. Select one of the frameset layouts from the center column. (“Fixed top, nested left” is a good one for most situations.) Click on the “Create” button to create the frameset.
2. Click OK to close the “Frame Tag Accessibility Attributes” dialog.
3. From the “Window” menu, click on “Frames” if there is not already a check-mark next to it. This will open a small window in the lower right corner of the screen that will help you to select and manipulate frames.
4. From the “File” menu, select “Save Frameset”. Save the frameset as index.html in your X:\public_html folder.
5. For each frame in your frameset:
 - a. Click in the frame to select it.
 - b. From the “File” menu, select “Save Frame”.
 - c. Choose an obvious file name. For the top frame, use top_frame.html. The largest frame is usually called main_frame.html
6. Each frame is defined in a separate HTML file. You may add text, links, and images to each of these frames as usual.
7. Add text to each frame to make different from the other frames. From the “File” menu, select “Save All”.
8. Usually, only the content of the largest frame changes. All other frames remain unchanged.

Next, we will create two other pages that can be displayed in the main frame.

9. From the “File” menu, select “New” and select “Basic” from the left column and “HTML” from the center column. Click on the “Create” button. Type some text and then save the file as “body1.html”. Create another basic HTML page and save it as body2.html.
10. In the left frame of the frameset, add text to be links for main_frame, body1 and body2.
 - a. Select the text, and then create the link in the usual way.
 - b. Blow the Link field, select a “Target” for the link.
 - i. To make the link appear in the main frame, choose target “mainFrame”.
 - ii. To make the link replace the entire frameset, choose target “_parent”.
 - iii. To make the link open in a new window, choose target “_blank”.

Other targets can be used, but these are the most common choices.

The target “_blank” can be used on any page to make the link open a new window. The other targets make sense only when used within a frameset.

If a link on a page that is displayed in a frame does not specify a target, the new page will open in the same frame.

- c. Repeat the process to create links in the left frame that show each of the three pages in the main frame.

Finally, we will adjust the properties of each frame.

11. In the “Frames” window in the lower right corner of the screen, click on the left frame to select it. The Properties window at the bottom of the screen should display information about the left frame.
 - a. Change the value for “Scroll” from “No” to “Auto”.
 - b. Uncheck the box for “No Resize”.
 - c. Set the “Border” value to “Yes”, and select a border color.

In most cases, you do not want to change the properties of the other frames, but you can if you decide that you need to.

Thoughts about background colors and borders:

- There are two approaches to creating framesets: make it very obvious to the user that you are using a frameset, or try to hide the use of the frameset. Either is OK – it’s up to you.
- If you want to hide the use of frames, make the background color of each frame the same, and do not use borders between frames.
- If you want to make the frames obvious, use different background colors for each frame and use a border color that contrasts with the page background colors.

Typically, you will have just one frame set, and will link many different pages to it, with the target set to “mainFrame”.