

Putting Spaces at the Beginning of Text Lines in WordPress

Putting spaces at the beginning of text lines in WordPress (and other website tools) is harder than it ought to be. HTML, the programming language underlying web pages, ignores leading spaces, and there is no [TAB] character. There is a work-around however, though it involves editing the code that presents your content.

While you can't just type a [space] or a [TAB] at the beginning of a line, you can use a small piece of code that represents a space in HTML. That piece of code looks like this:

** **

The **ampersand** at the beginning, and the **semi-colon** at the end, identify this little code as a command. The “nbsp” stands for “non-breaking space”. When a web browser encounters this code, it displays a blank space; the thing you may desire at the beginning of what should be an indented line of poetry. Note that you need to repeat this code for as many times as you want a space. If you wanted 5 spaces, you would enter “ ”

To use this code, your text should already be on your web page, and you should have the page open to edit. Here is the process:

1. Click in the block where your text is.
2. In the pop-up menu that appears above the block, click the three vertical dots at the end of the menu. This drops down the “options” menu.
3. From the options menu, select “Edit as HTML” near the bottom.
4. You are now viewing the underlying HTML code that actually displays your web page. Here is one stanza of the poem “Jabberwocky” in HTML:

Edit visually	⋮
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```
<p>'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves<br>Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:<br>All mimsy were the borogoves,<br>And the mome raths outgrabe.</p>
```

The items between “<” and “>” are HTML tags. “<p>” is the start of a paragraph. “
” is a line break.

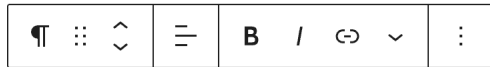
“</p>” is the end of a paragraph. It is important when you are editing the HTML that you not disturb these tags. You will notice that the text between the tags is your actual text.

5. To add spaces at the beginning of selected lines, Click after the HTML tag and enter the number of “ ” that is the number of spaces you want. Here is the example above with four spaces added at the beginning of the 2nd and 4th lines.

Edit visually	⋮
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```
<p>'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves<br>&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:<br>All mimsy were the borogoves,<br>&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;And the mome raths outgrabe.</p>
```

6. Notice that the “ ” tag goes right after the “
” tag, and before the beginning of the line of text. You do not have to leave any spaces around the tags. *(You may find the semi-colon at the end of the tag visually confusing when it is up against the poem text. I do.)*
7. When you have finished, click the “Edit visually” button in the short menu right above your block of text. This will take you out of HTML mode, and you will see an approximation of how the line will appear on the finished web page.



'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

8. After adding your leading spaces, you can save and view the page as you would normally.
9. Should you need to change the amount of space at the beginning of lines, you can enter the “Edit as HTML” option again, and add or remove “ ” tags as you see fit.