

PHPDOC specification

PHPDoc is **a standard for documenting PHP code using special comments (DocBlocks) that describe classes, functions, and variables**, allowing tools like phpDocumentor to generate API docs and IDEs to offer better code intelligence (type hinting, completion). It's JavaDoc-inspired, uses `@tags` (like `@param`, `@return`), and is being formalized by the PHP Framework Interoperability Group (PHP-FIG) through PHP Standards Recommendations (PSRs) for a consistent specification.

Core Components of PHPDoc

DocBlocks: Multi-line C-style comments (`/** ... */`) placed before code elements.

Summary: A brief, one-line description, ending with a period or two newlines.

Description: An extended, detailed explanation, supporting Markdown.

Tags: Special descriptors starting with `@` (e.g., `@var`, `@param`, `@return`, `@access`, `@throws`) for metadata.

Key Tags & Examples

`@param`: Describes a function parameter (`@param string $name`).

`@return`: Describes the return value (`@return bool`).

`@var`: Describes a property or variable type (`@var int $count`).

`@throws`: Documents exceptions thrown (`@throws \Exception`).

Why It's Important

Code Readability: Makes code self-documenting.

IDE Support: Enables type inference and better autocompletion in IDEs (PhpStorm, NetBeans).

Automated Docs: Generators (phpDocumentor) create searchable, navigable websites from comments. ●

Formalization (PSR-14 & Beyond)

While PHPDoc started informally, the **PHP Framework Interoperability Group (PHP-FIG)** has worked on formalizing its components into PSRs (like the initial work started in 2013) to create a unified, official standard for PHP documentation, ensuring consistency across tools and projects.

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