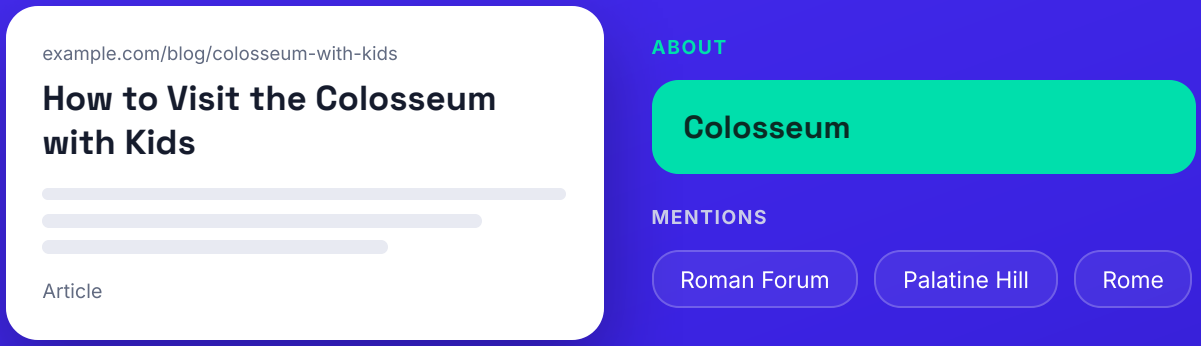
Entity Schema: About and Mentions

How to tell machines what a page is about, which entities it only mentions, and which real-world thing each one is, using about, mentions, mainEntity, sameAs and @id.

Teaching series · Lesson 7 · intermediate

ONE PAGE, ONE MAIN SUBJECT, SEVERAL SUPPORTING ENTITIES



Illustrative example.

45
minutes

5
key properties

3
worked examples

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Before you start

What this lesson covers

Most schema describes **what kind of page** something is: an article, a product, a FAQ. Entity schema describes **what the page is about**, and connects it to the real-world things it discusses.

By the end of this lesson you can

- Separate the **page** from the **entity** it describes.
- Use **about**, **mentions**, **mainEntity** and **sameAs** correctly.
- Decide whether an entity is **about** or a **mention** with two simple tests.
- Give entities stable **@id** identifiers and link them across pages.
- Avoid the mistakes that make entity schema **misleading**.

Before this lesson

Lesson 2 (**triples and schema**) and Lesson 5 (**entities**). You should be able to read a JSON-LD block.

How to use it

Read Parts 1 to 4 and the three examples, mark up a page in the **exercise on page 10**, then take the **quiz on page 11**.

Part 1

The page is not the entity

A URL is a **document**. The Colosseum is a **thing in the world**. Schema works best when it keeps the two apart, and then connects them.

	The page	The entity
What it is	A document at a URL	A real-world person, place, organization, product or idea
Schema type	WebPage, Article, AboutPage, ProfilePage	Organization, Person, Place, Product, TouristTrip, Thing
How many	One per URL	Can appear on many pages
Identified by	Its URL	An **@id** you choose, plus **sameAs** links to its records elsewhere

Why it matters

If you mark up your About page as if it **were** the company, every page about the company looks like a duplicate entity. Keep one Organization node, give it an **@id**, and point to it from every page.

The connecting properties

about and **mentions** connect a page to the entities in its content. **mainEntity** names the primary one. **sameAs** connects an entity to its identity elsewhere. [1]

Part 2

Five properties to know

All five are defined by schema.org. None of them produces a Google rich result on its own; they help describe what the page is about. [2]

Property	Used on	Meaning	Use it for
about	A page or creative work	The **subject matter** of the content	The one or two things the page is about
mentions	A page or creative work	A **reference to** something, not necessarily its subject	Supporting entities named in the text
mainEntity	A page or creative work	The **primary entity** described	The product, trip, person or organization the page exists for
sameAs	Any entity	A URL that **unambiguously identifies** the entity	Wikipedia, Wikidata, official site, official profiles
@id	Any node	A **stable identifier** for this node in your graph	Reusing one Organization or Person across pages

Also useful

subjectOf is the reverse of about: an entity can point to a page about it. **mainEntityOfPage** is the reverse of mainEntity. You rarely need both directions; pick one and be consistent.

Part 3

About or mentions? Two tests

Most errors come from putting every entity in **about**. Two quick tests settle it.

1

The removal test

If you removed this entity, would the page **lose its purpose**? Yes: **about**. No, it would just lose some detail: **mentions**.

2

The title test

Does the **title or main heading promise** this entity? If the title is “How to Visit the Colosseum with Kids,” the Colosseum is about. Rome is a mention.

Entity on the Colosseum page	Removal test	Title test	Property
Colosseum	Page loses its purpose	In the title	**about**
Families with children	Page changes audience	In the title (“with Kids”)	**about** (or audience)
Roman Forum	Loses a detail	Not in the title	**mentions**
Rome	Loses context	Not in the title	**mentions**
A gelato shop near the exit	Barely noticed	No	Leave it out

Rules of thumb

Keep **about** to one or two entities. Use **mentions** for entities the text actually discusses, not every name on the page. **Only mark up entities that appear in the visible content.** [3]

Example 1

An article: about and mentions

A blog post about visiting the Colosseum with children, written by a known author.

Article with about, mentions and sameAs

```
{
  "@context": "https://schema.org",
  "@type": "Article",
  "@id": "https://example.com/blog/colosseum-with-
kids#article",
  "headline": "How to Visit the Colosseum with Kids",
  "author": {"@id":
"https://example.com/about#person"},
  "about": {
    "@type": "LandmarksOrHistoricalBuildings",
    "name": "Colosseum",
    "sameAs":
["https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colosseum",

"https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q10285"]
  },
  "mentions": [
    {"@type": "Place", "name": "Roman Forum",
     "sameAs":
"https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Forum"},
    {"@type": "Place", "name": "Palatine Hill",
     "sameAs":
"https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palatine_Hill"},
    {"@type": "City", "name": "Rome",
     "sameAs": "https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q220"}
  ]
}
```

What to notice

about has one entity, typed as specifically as schema.org allows.

sameAs points to Wikipedia and Wikidata, so there's no doubt **which** Colosseum. [4]

mentions lists only places the article actually discusses.

author reuses the person's **@id** from the About page instead of repeating their details.

Wikidata IDs shown for the Colosseum (Q10285) and Rome (Q220). **Always look IDs up** before using them.

Examples 2 and 3

A product page and an About page

When a page exists **for** one entity, use mainEntity. Connect nodes with @id.

Tour page: WebPage with mainEntity and @graph

```
{
  "@context": "https://schema.org",
  "@graph": [
    {"@type": "WebPage",
     "@id": "https://example.com/tours/colosseum-
family#webpage",
     "url": "https://example.com/tours/colosseum-
family",
     "name": "Colosseum Family Tour",
     "mainEntity": {"@id":
"https://example.com/tours/colosseum-family#trip"}},
    {"@type": "TouristTrip",
     "@id": "https://example.com/tours/colosseum-
family#trip",
     "name": "Colosseum Family Tour",
     "touristType": "Families with children",
     "provider": {"@id":
"https://example.com/#organization"},
     "itinerary": {"@type": "Place", "name":
"Colosseum",
       "sameAs":
"https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colosseum"}}
  ]
}
```

About page: AboutPage with mainEntity Organization

```
{
  "@context": "https://schema.org",
  "@type": "AboutPage",
  "@id": "https://example.com/about#webpage",
  "mainEntity": {
    "@type": "Organization",
    "@id": "https://example.com/#organization",
    "name": "[Company name]",
    "url": "https://example.com/",
    "sameAs":
["https://www.linkedin.com/company/[company]",
               "https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/[Q-
number]"]
  }
}
```

Tour page

The page and the trip are **two nodes** in one **@graph**. The trip's provider points to the company's **@id**, defined once on the About page.

About page

The Organization's **@id** (“#organization”) becomes the reference every other page uses. Its **sameAs** lists only profiles that are **genuinely this company's**.

Part 4

sameAs: getting identity right

sameAs is the strongest claim in entity schema: **this node is the same thing as that record**. Get it wrong and you merge two different things.

Good sameAs targets	Not sameAs targets
The entity's Wikipedia article	A page **about a topic** you write about
The entity's Wikidata item	A **competitor's** or partner's page
The official website	A news article that **mentions** the entity
Official social or business profiles	A founder's personal profile on the **company** node

How to choose

Prefer **Wikidata or Wikipedia** for well-known entities, and **official profiles** for your own organization and people. Check the record really describes **the same thing**, not a namesake.

Where this connects

My *Entity Clarity: Identity to Evidence* playbook covers how to verify identity before adding sameAs, with a worked example of what goes wrong.

Common mistakes

What makes entity schema misleading

These are the patterns I see most often in audits.

1

Everything in about

Listing ten entities as **about** says the page is about nothing in particular.

2

Invisible entities

Marking up entities **not in the text** to look more relevant. Markup must match the page.

3

sameAs to topics

Pointing an Organization's sameAs to a **destination or topic page**. That's about, not identity.

4

A new entity every page

Repeating the company's full details with **no @id**, so each page creates a separate Organization.

5

Generic types

Using **Thing** when a specific type exists: Place, City, Person, Product, Event.

6

Unverified IDs

Guessing a Wikidata number. A wrong ID **links you to the wrong entity**.

Exercise

Add entity schema to one page

Time: 20 minutes. Use a blog post or a service page you know well.

Step	What to do
1	List every **named entity** in the visible text.
2	Apply the **removal and title tests**. Mark one or two as about, the rest as mentions or leave out.
3	Choose the **most specific type** for each entity.
4	Look up **sameAs** targets: Wikipedia, Wikidata or official pages. Verify each one.
5	Reuse your **Organization and Person @id** for publisher and author.
6	Write the JSON-LD and test it in the **Schema Markup Validator**. Fix any undefined properties.

What good looks like

One or two about entities, mentions that match the text, verified sameAs links, and author and publisher **referenced by @id**.

Discussion question

Which entity on your page was hardest to classify as about or mention? What does that say about the page's **focus**?

Check your understanding

Quick quiz

Answers are on the next page.

1. On “How to Visit the Colosseum with Kids,” Rome is best marked as:

a) about
b) mentions
c) sameAs

2. mainEntity is used to name:

a) Every entity on the page
b) The primary entity the page describes
c) The page's URL

3. A good sameAs target for a city is:

a) A hotel booking page in that city
b) Its Wikidata item
c) A blog post about the city

4. Why give your Organization an @id?

a) So every page can reference one consistent node
b) To create a rich result
c) To hide it from users

5. Can you mark up an entity that isn't in the visible text?

a) Yes, for relevance
b) No, markup must match the page
c) Only in mentions

Answers and sources

Answer key, glossary and further reading

Answer key

1: **b**. Context, not the subject.
2: **b**.
3: **b**.
4: **a**.
5: **b**.

Glossary

about: the subject matter of a page.
mentions: a reference, not the subject.
mainEntity: the primary entity a page describes.
sameAs: a URL identifying the same entity.
@id: a stable identifier for a node.
@graph: several connected nodes in one block.

01 **about, mentions, mainEntity and sameAs. Schema.org**
Definitions of the properties used in this lesson.
https://schema.org/about

02 **Introduction to structured data markup. Google Search Central**
https://developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/structured-data/intro-structured-data

03 **General structured data guidelines. Google Search Central**
Markup must represent the page's visible content.
https://developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/structured-data/sd-policies

04 **Wikidata: Colosseum (Q10285) and Rome (Q220)**
Identifiers used in Example 1.
https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q10285

05 **JSON-LD 1.1: node identifiers and @graph. W3C**
https://www.w3.org/TR/json-ld11/

Lesson by Ameneh Saeednia, prepared with AI assistance. Example URLs and company names are placeholders. Related: *Entity Clarity: Identity to Evidence* and Lesson 2 of this series.