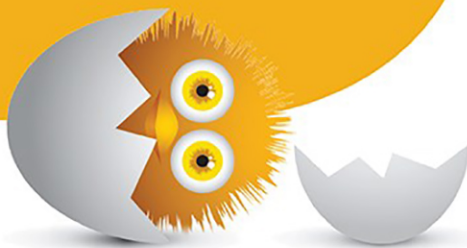# JavaScript™

ABSOLUTE BEGINNER'S GUIDE

No experience necessary!

Kirupa Chinnathambi

JavaScript

Second Edition

ABSOLUTE BEGINNER'S GUIDE

Kirupa Chinnathambi

QUE

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Learn how to go beyond alerts for displaying results
- Understand how the console works
- Learn the variety of logging solutions you have at your fingertips

11

CONSOLE LOGGING BASICS

When you are writing code, you will often find yourself in one of two situations. One situation is where you wonder if the code you just wrote is going to run at all. In the other situation, you know your code runs, but it isn't running correctly. There is something wrong...**somewhere**.

In both of these situations, what you need is some extra visibility into what your code is doing. A timeless approach for bringing this visibility involves the `alert` method:

```
let myButton = document.querySelector("#myButton");
myButton.addEventListener("click", doSomething, false);

function doSomething(e) {
  alert("Is this working?");
}
```

Using the `alert` method isn't bad. It works fine for simple situations, but as your code starts to do more, relying on them doesn't work as well. For starters, you'll probably go insane from dismissing the large number of dialogs that keep popping up while your code is running! You'll also want an easy way to persist the messages you are seeing. The fleeting nature of our `alert` dialogs makes any sort of long-term logging like that difficult.

In this tutorial, we're going to look at one of the greatest inventions of all time that makes it easy to help us figure out what our code is doing. We are going to be learning about something known as the **console**.

Onward!

Meet the Console

Even if you think you write the most perfect JavaScript, you'll be spending a fair amount of time in what is known as the **console**. If you've never used the console before, it is part of your browser's developer tools where all sorts of text and stuff gets printed for you to see and (occasionally) interact with.

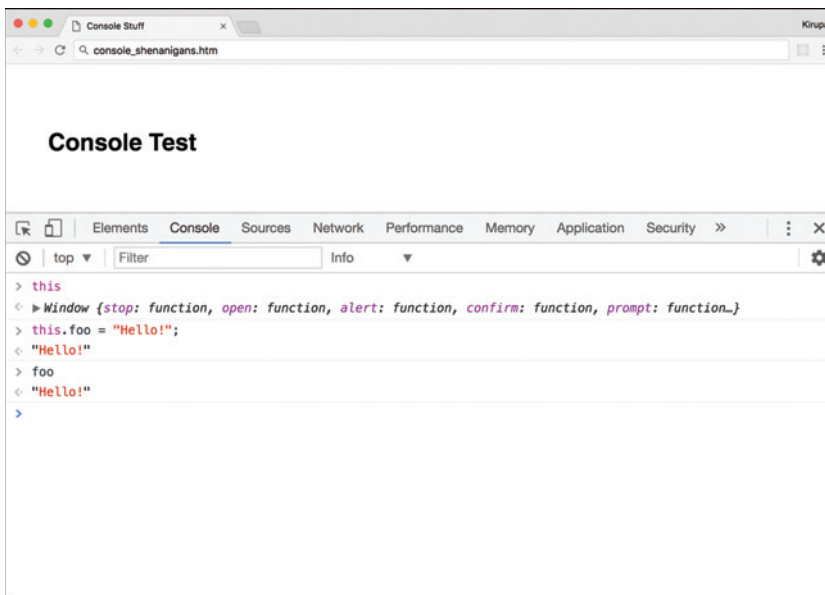It will look a little bit like what is shown in Figure 11.1.

FIGURE 11.1

Meet the console.

At a very high level, your console helps with a bunch of things:

- You can read messages you have told your code to log and display

- You can modify your application state by setting (or overwriting) variables and values

- You can inspect the value of any DOM element, applied style, or code that is accessible and in scope

- You can use it as a virtual code editor and write/execute some code just for kicks

In this article, we won't focus on all the things your console is capable of doing. Instead, we're just going to take it easy and gradually get you comfortable with using the console to just display messages. We will cover all of the crazy console-related things eventually, so don't worry.

Displaying the Console

The first thing we are going to do is get your console up. The console is a part of your browser's developer tools. The way you bring up your browser developer tools is by fiddling with your browser's menus or by using the handy keyboard shortcuts. From inside your browser, press `Ctrl + Shift + I` on Windows or `Cmd + Alt + I` on Mac to bring up the developer tools.
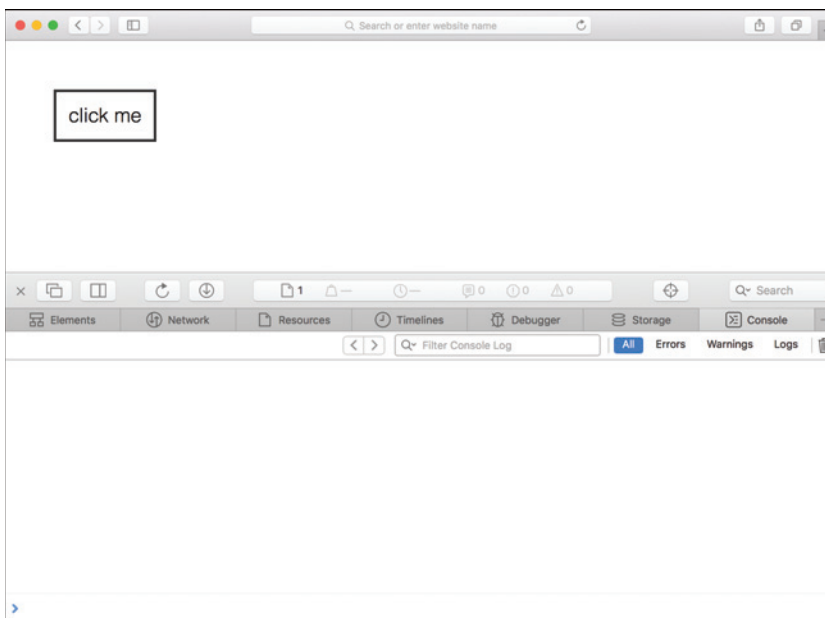
Depending on your browser and platform, each of your developer tools will look a little different. The important thing is to find the Console tab and make sure the console gets displayed.

When you bring up the console in Chrome, you'll see something like what you see in Figure 11.2.
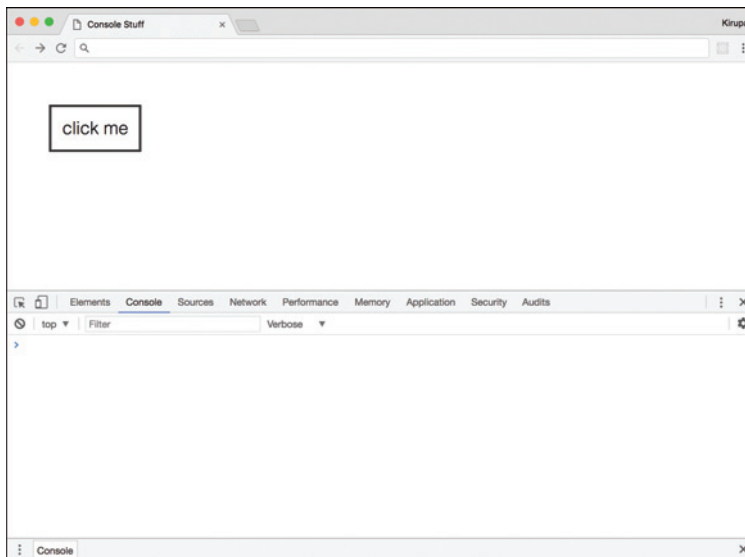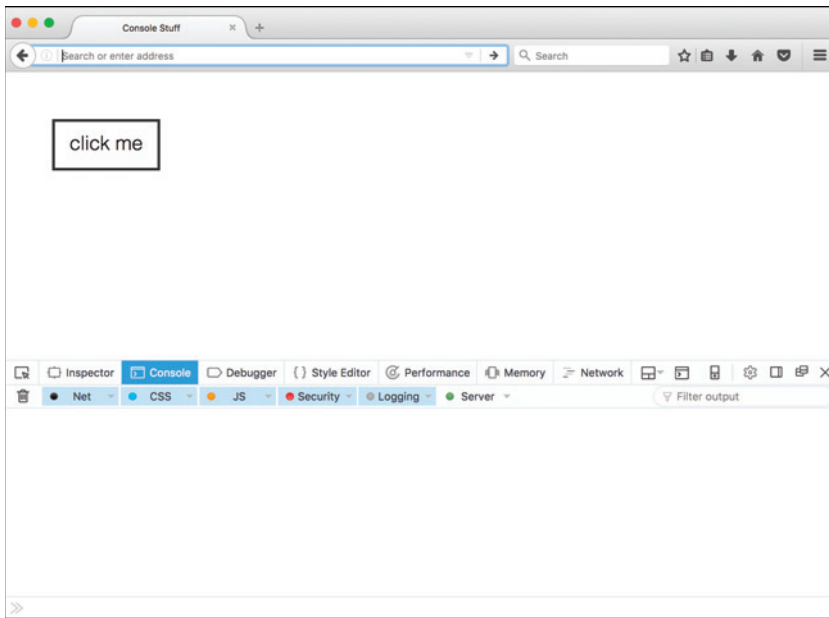
FIGURE 11.2

The Chrome console.

On Safari, the console will look a bit like Figure 11.3.
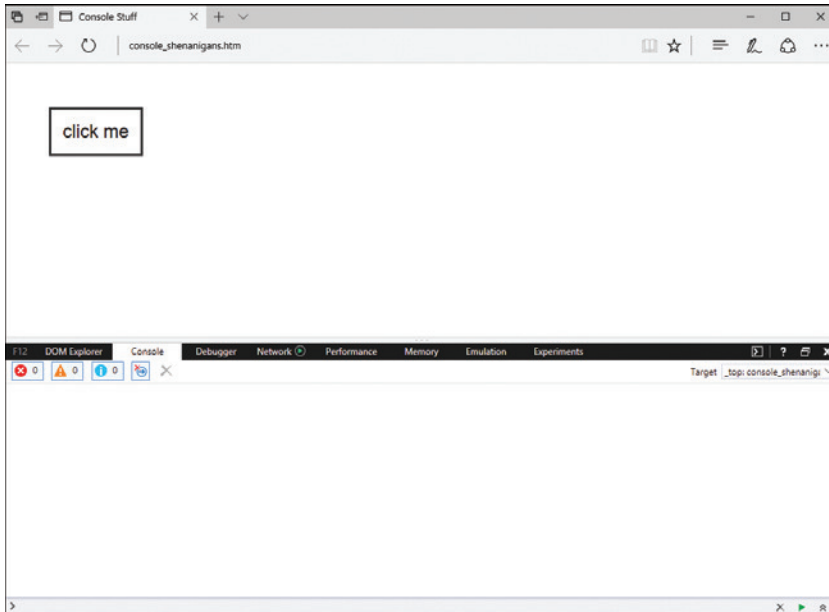

FIGURE 11.3

The Safari console.

Firefox's console looks like what is shown in Figure 11.4.

FIGURE 11.4

The Firefox console.

Bringing up the console in Microsoft Edge will look like Figure 11.5.

FIGURE 11.5

The Edge console.

The thing I want to highlight is that it doesn't matter which browser you use. The console looks and functions pretty much the same on all browsers. Just bring up the console in your favorite browser and get ready to start actually using the console in the following sections.

If You Want to Follow Along

Now, you can just read the following sections and learn a whole bunch of console-related things without lifting a finger. If that is what you would like to do, then skip all of this and jump to the next section.

On the other hand, if you want to get your hands a bit dirty and see some of the console shenanigans for yourself on your screen, create a new HTML document and add the following HTML, CSS, and JavaScript into it:

```html
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>

<head>
  <title>Console Stuff</title>

  <style>
    #container {
      padding: 50px;
    }

    #myButton {
      font-family: sans-serif;
      font-size: 24px;
      font-weight: lighter;
      background-color: #FFF;
      border: 3px #333 solid;
      padding: 15px;
    }

    #myButton:hover {
      background-color: aliceblue;
    }
```