

HTML Workshop 3

Formatting and Layout using CSS



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Introduction

CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) is called CSS because when you are good at using it you will want to use more than one style sheet for formatting and laying your website. That is why it is CASCADING – it can use several style sheets at once to run a website for navigation, layout, text, as well as special style sheets for printing the web pages.

OK, before we go any further, let's establish what CSS is. It is a code language invented especially for the design of web pages. It is also part of 'Web 2' standards. It has become a very powerful language and is now used for all kinds of functionality as well as design and layout.

We can create CSS styles either by placing CSS styles in the head of our html file, or creating a separate CSS file. The best way of learning CSS is to write CSS as a separate file, and linking to it from the html page. This is what we are going to learn.

Make a CSS file

File/New/ choose CSS file

There is no 'design' or WYSIWYG view for a CSS file – this is a code file ONLY

Save the file as 'layout.css'.

Dreamweaver will colour code all your CSS styles so that you can see them more easily and spot errors more quickly.

Styling fonts and headers with CSS

Styling Headers

<h1text</h1> in the html is styled with the h1 element:

```
h1 {  
font-family: tahoma, san serif;  
font-size: 2.0em;  
color: #666999;  
text-align: left;  
font-weight; bold;  
}
```

Likewise the h2 element is:

```
h2 {  
font-family: tahoma, san serif;  
font-size: 1.5em;  
color: #CC9999;  
text-align: left;  
font-weight; bold;  
}
```

And so on. It is usual to use 3 or 4 header styles.

Styling Paragraphs

`<p>text</p>` in the html is styled with the p element:

```
p {
font-family: arial, verdana, san serif;
font-size: 1.0em;
color: #000000;
text-align: left;
font-weight: bold;
}
```

You can also style paragraphs in different ways by using the following paragraph *classes*:

```
.par1 {
font-family: arial, verdana, san serif;
font-size: 0.9em;
color: #000000;
text-align: left;
font-weight: normal;
}
```

```
.par2 {
font-family: arial, verdana, san serif;
font-size: 1.0em;
color: #000000;
text-align: left;
font-weight: bold;
}
```

Notice you place a full stop in front of a class, and the html would look like this:

```
<p class="par1">text</p>
```

You can style all elements and classes any way you like. There are no rules, except that the CSS validates at the end of the process!

Styling an Image

An image element is styled like this:

```
img {
border: 1px solid #CCCCCC;
padding: 4px 4px 4px 4px;
margin: 5px 5px 5px 5px;
}
```

Again, try out changes to the numbers and the colours, try taking away the border (replace 1px with 0), see if you can get the text in a div to flow round an image.

Styling Lists

We saw in the html workshop that a list uses `` with `text` inside the ul element. To style a list we do the following:

```
ul {
text-align: left;
float: left;
padding: 10px 10px 10px 10px;
margin: 5px 5px 5px 5px;
}
li {
font-family: arial, verdana, san serif;
font-size: 0.8em;
color: #000000;
font-weight: bold;
}
```

We can use as many different list styles as we want in a style sheet.

Styling 'Divs'

A div usually uses an ID. An ID can only be used once in a page for the CSS to validate (more about this later). An ID is preceded by #, like this:

```
#wrapper {
padding: 5px 5px 5px 5px;
margin: 0 0 0 0;
float:left;
background-color: blue;
border: 1px solid #996699;
width: 500px;
}
```

This should be experimented with. Try the following:

- Change the code in the float from left to right
- Change the width to a percentage
- Type some text into the div, then change the padding numbers
- Change the margins from 0, to say 10px each
- Try some other changes

Combine the font styles with the div styles.

The Box Model

The Box Model refers to how to use CSS to make layout for web pages in the way that we would use tables. CSS is a superior way of laying out a web page as it uses a lot less code and is therefore faster at loading into a browser.

CSS uses 'divs' to lay out the page. A great explanation of how this works is found here: http://redmelon.net/tstme/box_model/

See if you can make a layout similar to the 'tables' layout we looked at earlier:

header		
left		right

Tips: use an outer div to hold everything together (wrapper), and then a div for the header, and a left and right div.

Remember you can always use % instead of fixed widths (px) for your divs. This means they will 'stretch' to fit the browser window. If you do use fixed widths, it is recommended you work to a 770px width maximum to ensure your page fits any browser resolution.

Testing your CSS

Testing is very important when building web pages, and we should test at EVERY STAGE of development. Test in as many different browsers as possible, to ensure your pages work properly in all browsers (especially Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox), at all resolutions.

Linking your CSS file to your HTML file

Below shows how to link to your style sheet from your html file. Place a link like this in the HEAD of your html. I.E, place the link after <head> and before </head>.

```
<link rel="stylesheet" href="layout.css" type="text/css"/>
```

There are other ways to link to a style sheet, but this is a main method.

```
<link type="text/css" rel="stylesheet" href="stylesheet.css"
media="screen"/>
<link type="text/css" rel="stylesheet" href="printstyle.css"
media="print"/>
```

Here we have added the media specification, to allow for 2 separate CSS files to be linked, one for the screen and one for print.

Dreamweaver and CSS

Dreamweaver allows you to see all the styles and classes being used in a web page, even though they are on separate files, linking to your page. Find the CSS Properties Window and see how many CSS styles and classes it is displaying. By clicking on any of these styles you can edit them from within a tool window, and by using this window you will be able to find out more about how to write particular CSS styles. However, it is not recommended you rely on this method alone to create CSS, as the styles are written in a confusing manner (all on one line) and therefore are not good practise.

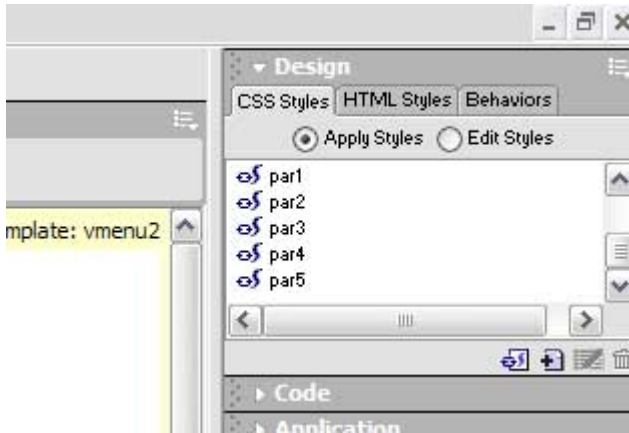


Fig1 Showing the CSS Design Properties window

Validating your CSS

W3C (The World Wide Web Consortium) run a CSS validation service here:

<http://jigsaw.w3.org/css-validator/>

To use it, your CSS must be published online. Enter the link to your CSS file, and see if your code is valid! Once your code is valid, you are entitled to use the validation badge (supplied on the site) on your web pages.

Good Books and Tutorials

W3Schools CSS Tutorials - <http://www.w3schools.com/css/default.asp>

CSS Zen Garden - <http://www.csszengarden.com/>

List of O'Reilly books on CSS - <http://tinyurl.com/3agv7g>

/Pen Lister, 2008