

MMP100

Introduction to Multimedia

Introduction to Cascading Stylesheets

Cascading Style Sheets or CSS is a stylesheet language that is used to style documents composed in a markup language such as HTML or XHTML.

It is now considered best practices to have HTML or XHTML handle the structure of the document, and CSS handle the presentation.

What does this mean? The markup (HTML or XHTML) structures the document into paragraphs, headings and subheads, lists, images, links and whatever other elements we use.

CSS controls how these elements are displayed in a browser. It controls what font is used, the color of the text, the background color of the page, whether there is a border around an element- everything that has to do with the look of the page.

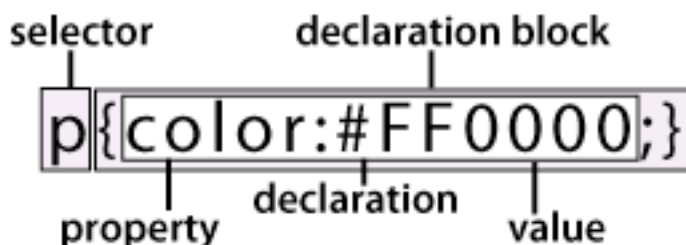
We have gotten used to how we write an HTML tag. A CSS rule is written with a very different syntax. Think of this as a plus- another way to keep structure (markup) and presentation (CSS) separate.

Syntax of a CSS rule

Every CSS rule must have a **selector**. The selector identifies to what the rule will be applied.

After the **selector**, inside of curly braces ({}) a CSS rule has a **declaration block** that in its simplest form contains a **property value** pair- the **property** that will be controlled by the CSS and the **value** that to which that property will be set. The property is followed by colon followed by the value, this is followed by a semi-colon.

An example makes it simpler:



The rule above uses the p element as the selector and will set the color of text in a p tag to red, using the hexadecimal rgb value for red.

There are a number of ways to specify a CSS selector. You can apply the CSS rules directly to the elements, use descendant or contextual selectors, or you can define your own selectors using ID or class selectors. For now let's just use element selectors.

CSS Properties for Styling Text

Here are some, there are more.

Property Name	Definition	Examples
color	Specifies color of text	<pre>p{color:red;} h1{color:#CCCCCC;}</pre>
font-family	Specifies the font family used	<pre>h2{font-family:Verdana, Geneva, Arial, san-serif;}</pre>
font-size	Specifies size of font	<pre>p{font-size:12px;}</pre>
line-height	Specifies amount of space between lines of text	<pre>p{line-height:1.5;}</pre>
text-align	Aligns the text in an element	<pre>h1{text-align:right}</pre>
text-decoration	Specifies text decoration, such as underline, strike-through	<pre>h3 {text-decoration:underline}</pre>

Methods of Adding CSS

There are a number of ways to style a document:

- Inline: in the tags in the HTML code
- Embedded: at the top of the document in the head element
- External stylesheets: an external document titled with the .css extension

External sheets are highly preferable to inline or embedded style sheets. \

Linked CSS

CSS is written in a separate document that is saved with the extension .css. The CSS document is then attached to an HTML file in one of the following methods. Both methods require typing the code into the Head section of the HTML document. This is the preferred way to use CSS, since you can use one sheet for many documents.

Using link element:

```
<link rel="stylesheet"
href="http://www.clintonstreet.com/mmp100/mystyles.css"
type="text/css">
```

Using style element:

```
<style type="text/css">
  @import url(mystyles.css);
</style>
```

Embedded CSS

CSS is written into the head section of the HTML documents using the <style> tag. We will use this method for now.

```
<style type="text/css">
  h2 {font-family: Verdana, Geneva, Arial, san-serif;}
  p {font-size: 12px;}
</style>
```

Inline CSS

CSS is written inside an HTML tag. Definitely not recommended, as it only affects that one element, and defeats the purpose of keeping the HTML (content/structure) away from the CSS (presentation).

```
<p style="font-size: 2em; color: #FF0000;">Inline CSS</p>
```

CSS comments

```
/* this is a CSS comment */
/* CSS comments can span several lines and this is how to write
them */
```