

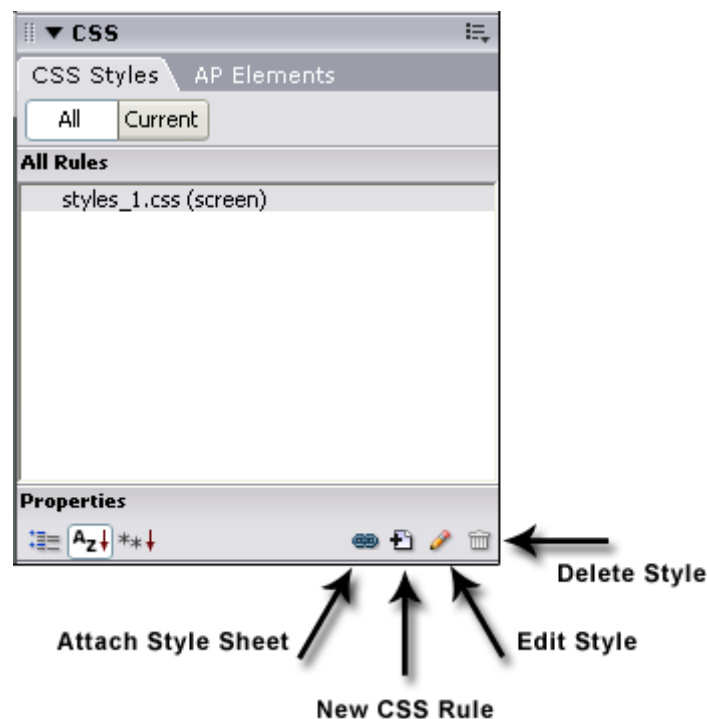
Using an external style sheet with Dreamweaver

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Can be used in conjunction with the **Introduction to CSS worksheet and exercise**

This handout explains how to create an external style sheet, the purpose of selector types and how to create styles. It does not show how to insert div tags.

Outlined below is the implementation of an external style sheet and how to create styles with the various style selectors. After practicing the styles, try experimenting with creating styles for other elements on the page.



CSS Styles panel – Window > CSS Styles

Creating and linking a style sheet to an HTML document

Firstly, establish a root folder and define the site in DW with the Manage Sites procedure. Then create the required site structure and HTML files via the Files window.

Style sheets are either saved into the first level of the root folder or into a folder called *css*. *The latter is possibly more convenient in the long-run as it is possible to use more than one style sheet in a web site.*

A new CSS file can be created by:

- Go to File > New... and in the New Document window choose Blank Page – CSS and click on create. A new CSS document appears in the work space.

Next, save the file. Go to File > Save or Save As. DW will automatically append the file with the .css file extension at this point.

- Create a new file from the Files panel as if creating a new HTML document. Give the file a name but this time append the filename with .css file extension.

Note: it appears that DW does not always seem to recognise the file as a CSS document when using the second method. To check that it is OK open the CSS file by double-clicking on it in the Files panel. If you see this text in the document then it is OK:

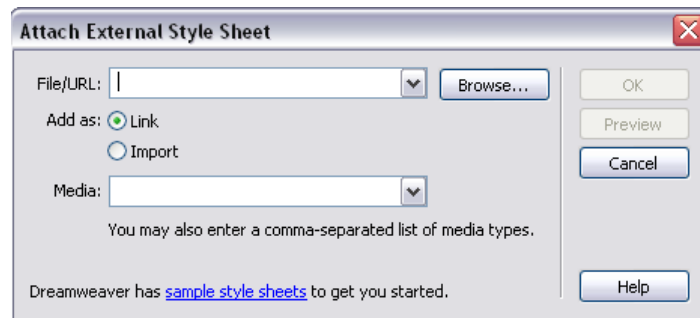
```
@charset "utf-8";
/* CSS Document */
```

When naming a style sheet, use the same naming principles as when naming an html document.

Linking the style sheet

Styles in the CSS document will have no impact upon a web page unless that web page is linked (attached) to it. To attach a CCS document, *ensure the web page is the active document on the DW work space.*

In the CSS window, click on the Attach Style Sheet button and the Attach External Style Sheet dialogue opens.

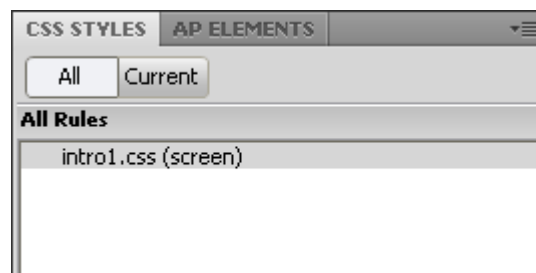


Browse for the style sheet, for Add as: choose link. From the Media drop down select screen. Click OK. *Screen defines the CSS document as one that is for presentation of the web page in a browser.*

A link to the style sheet is now entered into the head of the HTML document:

```
<link href="css/intro1.css" rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" media="screen">
```

A reference to the style sheet will now be visible in the CSS Styles panel.



Getting ready to use the style sheet

If the HTML document is blank then it will need to be populated with content. Typically, content would be added prior to creating styles and styles created as you go along.

The styling of elements can be created from the Properties panel or from the CSS panel. *In either case it is essential that styles are entered into the external style sheet and not in the head of the HTML document.* For the purposes of simplicity, the process described here creates styles from the CSS panel.

Creating and applying styles

There are three main types of styles called *selectors* that can be created:

1. **Class Selector.** These are styles that can be applied to any element or item selected in the web page. These are the selector types that are created when using the Properties panel to change the style of selected text. A particular class selector can be used more than once on a web page.
2. **Tag Selector.** These target HTML tags in the web page. A style created for a tag affects every instance of that tag on the page.
3. **ID Selector.** ID is short-hand for *identifier*. These are commonly used for positioning <div> tags in page layout. An ID selector should only be used once in a page.

Compound Selector

A compound selector is a style made from a combination of one or more of the three main selectors. They offer increased flexibility in styling elements on a page. For instance, if the <h1> tag appears more than once on a page but different styles are required for them, then a compound selector can be created to make one <h1> look different to the other.

Note: In general, any styling properties not required when creating styles do not need to be specified. Only supply properties for those that are required.

Naming styles

For the naming of styles and any ID names the following should be observed:

- No spaces in names – underscore can be used (_) to denote spaces
- Use only letters and numbers
- Upper and lowercase can be used

Certain characters are used to denote particular selectors e.g.

The full stop (.) denotes a *class* selector

The hash sign (#) denotes an *ID* selector

Tag selectors are named by the HTML tag they are selecting and do not use a prefix.

The ID selector

The purpose of an ID (identifier) selector is to be used only once in a web page. An HTML element can be given an ID and a style created for the ID name. An ID is just like giving the HTML element a label.

```
<div id="banner">
```

When using div tags to control the layout of a page, each container will often have unique position. In this case, each div can have a unique identifier.

The following for creating a style for a div tag relevant for the handout *Worksheet: An Introduction to using CSS*

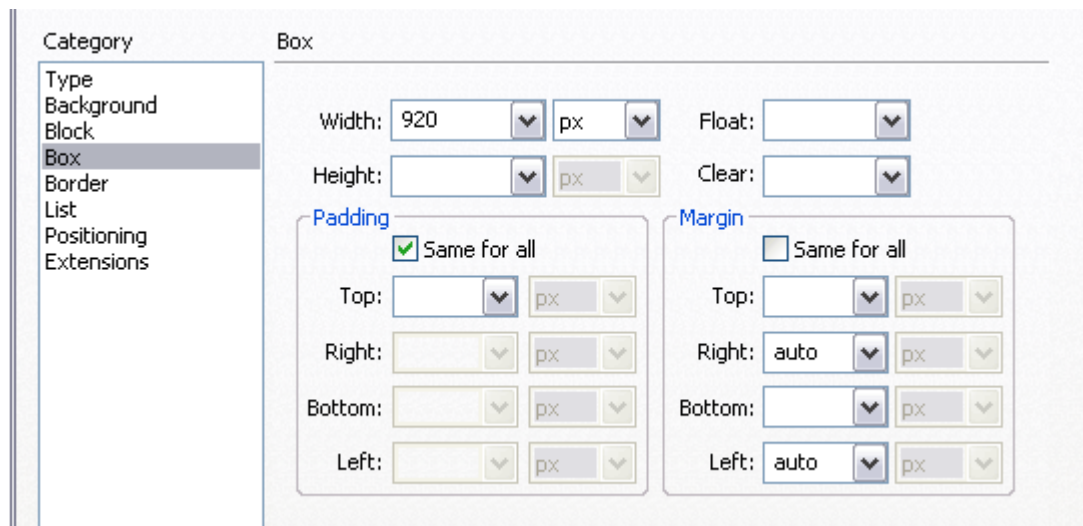
In the Design view, place the cursor in the placeholder text for a div e.g. *banner*. Click on New CSS Rule in the CSS Styles panel. The New CSS Rule dialogue opens:



The Selector Name should read *#banner*. If it does not, then type in the name (including the hash sign). Ensure that the Rule Definition names your style sheet. Click OK.

The CSS Rule Definition dialogue opens. This looks much like the Page Properties but there are many more options here. All styles are created from this dialogue.

In Category, on the left, choose *Box*. And enter the properties as in the following illustration and Click OK.

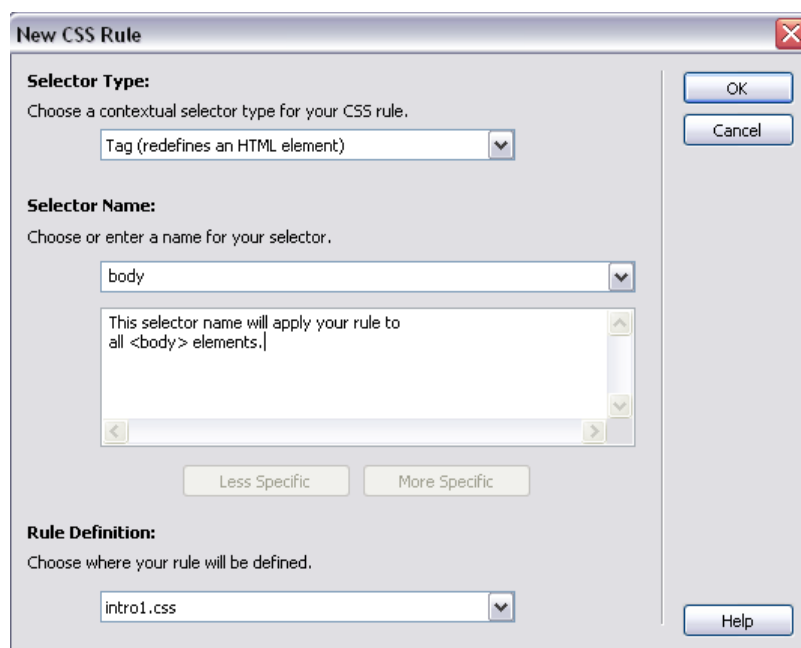


Margin *auto* for right and left positions the div in the horizontal centre of the page.

The Tag Selector

Typically, the first styles created (after those made for the size and position of div tags) are for the default text style and background colour. These attributes can be applied via the `<body>` tag.

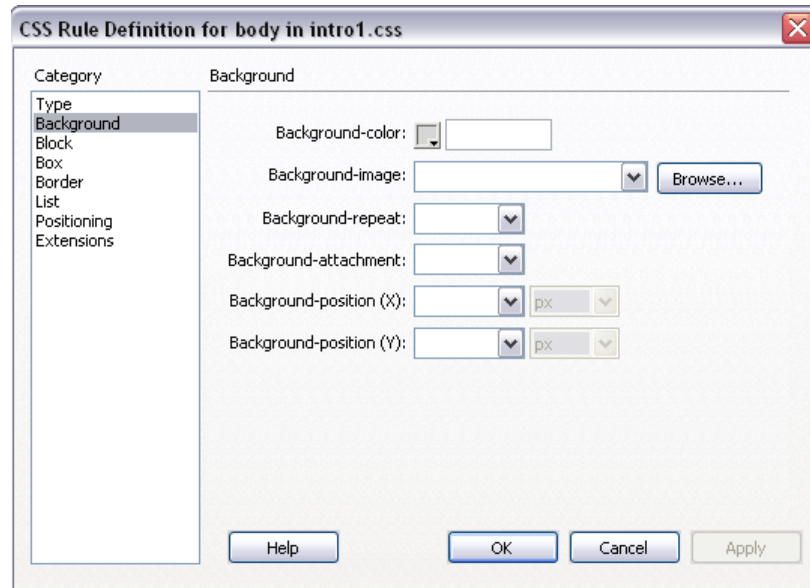
In the CSS Styles panel click on the New CSS Rule button. This opens the New CSS Rule window. From here, under *Selector Type*, choose *Tag* from the drop-down list. Next, under *Selector Name*, click on the dropdown list and choose the appropriate tag, in this case choose *body*.



Ensure that your style sheet is referenced where it says *Rule Definition*. Click OK.

Note: It is also possible to define the style in the HTML document in the Rule Definition drop-down and choosing "This document only". This will create the

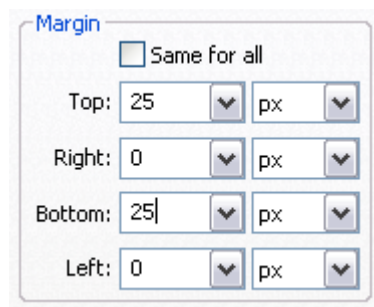
style in the head of the document. This can be used to override styles created in the external style sheet. This is a feature of the 'cascade'. Do not do this at this stage.



Select the Background category and choose properties for background colour and background image. For the background image (supplied with the exercise) click Browse for the image and choose:

Background-position (for x and y): *centre*

Click on Apply and the style will be applied to the page. Next, go to the Box category to set the page margins. This will position the contents of the page in relation to the edges of the browser window e.g.



Click OK when finished.

The style will now be referenced in the CSS Styles window beneath the name of the style sheet.

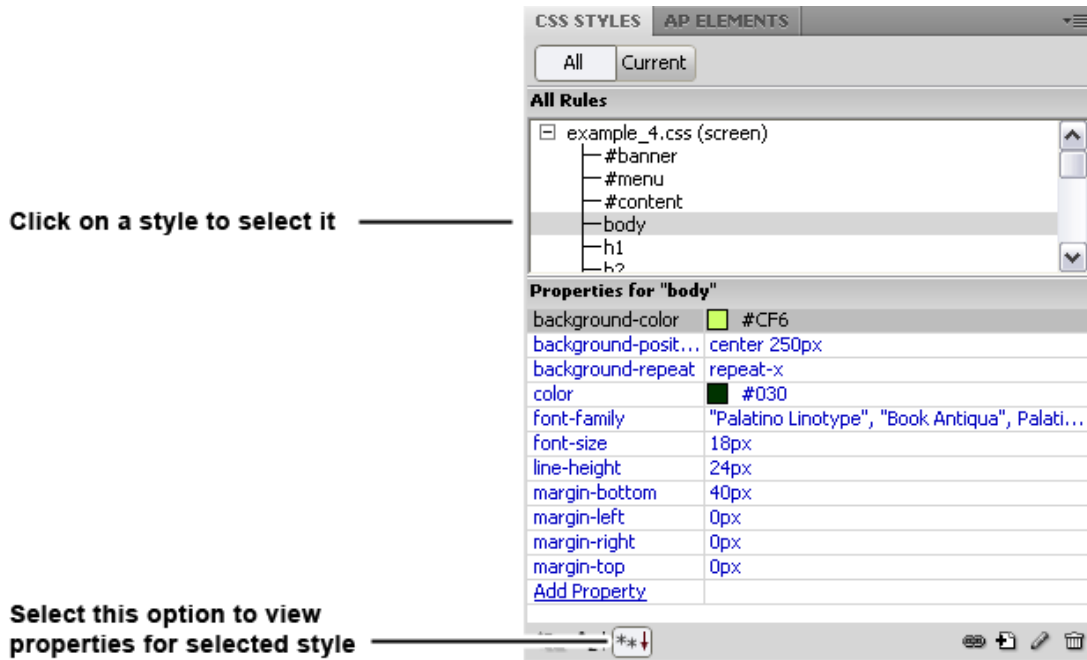
Editing a style

Dreamweaver provides several ways to edit a style sheet. Which method you choose depends on what is convenient to the way you work. To change the properties of a style do one of these 4 methods (the easiest options are the first two):

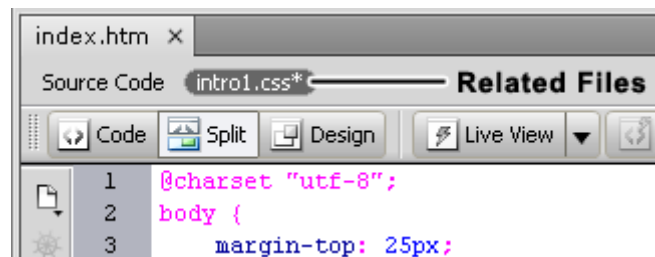
- In the CSS Styles panel double click on the style name *or* select the style name and click on the Edit Style button. This will open the CSS

Rule Definition dialogue. Avoid clicking on the New CSS Rule button as this will create a duplicate style and lead to confusion.

- Alternatively, elements for the style can be edited quickly from the properties section at the bottom of the panel. Click in the right hand column for existing properties and enter new values as required.



- A reference to the style sheet also appears at the top of the document window for any web page that is linked to a style sheet. This is the area where *Related Files* to the HTML document appear.



Click on the reference to the CSS file and it will appear in split view along with the html page. Edit the style sheet by typing into the style sheet directly. For any changes made this way to be visible in the web page, the design view will need to be refreshed. Do this by clicking in the design view or pressing F5.

- Open the CSS file as a separate document in the workspace. To open the CSS, double click on the file in the Files panel. Edit the style sheet by typing into the style sheet directly. For any changes made this way to be visible in the web page, the design view will need to be refreshed. Do this by clicking in the design view or pressing F5.

Previewing in a browser

Previewing in a browser may now require saving two documents. Changes made in the style sheet will not appear in the page when viewed in a browser if the style sheet has not been saved, even though the web page itself may be saved. When going to Preview in Browser, DW will prompt you to save changed documents.

Note: You can see if a document has unsaved changes because an asterisk (*) appears by the filename in tabs and related files at the top of the document window.

Heading sizes

Styles can be created for each heading size used on the page. To do this, proceed as with the *body* style, choosing Tag as Selector Type and the relevant heading size from Selector Name the drop down list.

Note: You can also place the cursor within the heading before choosing New CSS Rule. This can make DW assume that a Compound Selector is required e.g.

Selector Type:
Choose a contextual selector type for your CSS rule.
Compound (based on your selection)

Selector Name:
Choose or enter a name for your selector.
#banner h2

This selector name will apply your rule to
all <h2> elements
that are within any HTML elements with id "banner".

Less Specific More Specific

To remove references other than the heading size either click on the Less Specific button or delete them from the Selector Name field. Compound selectors are explained later.

Text links

Text links can be styled to appear differently to what is dictated by browser default. Dreamweaver places access for these under the Compound category in the New CSS dialogue. Text link styles are a type of selector referred to as *pseudo-classes*. Pseudo-classes allow special effects to be added to selectors.

Go to: http://www.w3schools.com/CSS/css_pseudo_classes.asp for more information

There are four categories available for styling text links:

a:link = how the link first appears

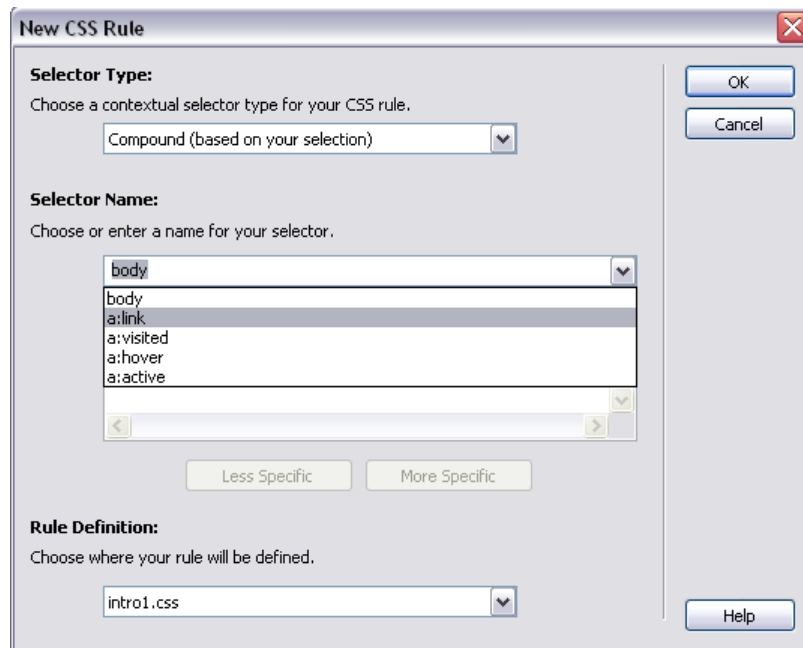
a:visited = appearance after the link has been clicked

a:hover = appearance when the cursor is over the link

a:active = appearance on mouse down and when the link is active e.g. open in another window

Before styling to take effect, the menu text on the page will need to have links applied to them. *To style text links there is no need to select them first.* As before, click on New CSS Rule in the CSS Styles panel. Under Selector type choose Compound then click on the drop-down for Selector name to see the link styles.

Best advice is to create a style for each category to override browser default values. Also, *ensure they are created in the style sheet in the order they are presented in the drop-down list*, otherwise they may not work effectively. Only the style for *a:link* will be visible in DW. Preview in a browser to see the full effect.



Note: The browser will retain a memory of any links that have been clicked. Therefore, when previewing text links in a browser, the style for visited links may be visible and not the primary *a:link* style. To undo this in the browser, clear the history and click on the refresh button or press the F5 key.

The Class selector

Class selectors are designed to be used more than once in a page if required. They can be created for almost anything. Use the class selectors for elements on the page that may require the same properties. Common use of class selectors is with text and images.

Let us presume that there is a particular word or phrase within the text that requires a different look to the main body of text. Emphasis can be done via HTML tags such as italics `` or bold `` etc. and of course styles

can then be created for those tags to modify their appearance by using a *tag selector*.

But, what if we want to retain those tags for other uses but require a different text styling, such as a different font and colour? This can be done by creating a *Class Selector* and applying it to the text on the page.

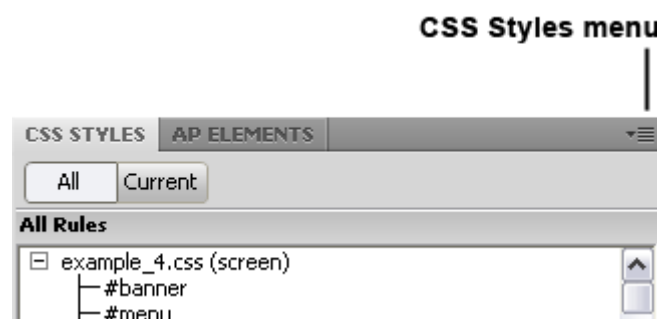
To create the style, proceed as before when making a new CSS rule. This time choose *Class* as the *Selector Type*. A name for this style will need to be created. Enter this in the Selector Name field. *There is no need to prefix the name with a full stop as choosing the Selector Type as Class will do this automatically*. Give the style a meaningful name, bearing in mind that there may eventually be more than one class selector created for text. Something such as *text_1* or *text1* would be appropriate.

Click OK and give the style properties as required. This time, clicking on apply does not work. This is because the style is not yet applied to the item on the page. This will need to be done after.

Applying a class selector

Click OK and the style will be present in the CSS window. Select a word, or words, within the text in the page or place the cursor within a paragraph. Then do one of the following:

- In the CSS window, highlight the style to be applied and from the CSS Styles *menu* choose Apply.



- Right click or Cmd click (Mac) on the style in the CSS window and choose Apply
- In the Properties panel click on the Style drop down menu and choose the style from this list. *Any class selectors you create will be available from the Properties panel in either HTML or CSS view.*

In the code the style will be applied via the `` tag like this:

```
<span class="text_1">original HTML</span>
```

DW inserts the `` tag to match the text selected on the page and includes the *class* style as an attribute of the tag.

If a paragraph is selected then the code will look like this:

`<p class="text_1">The text in a paragraph</p>`

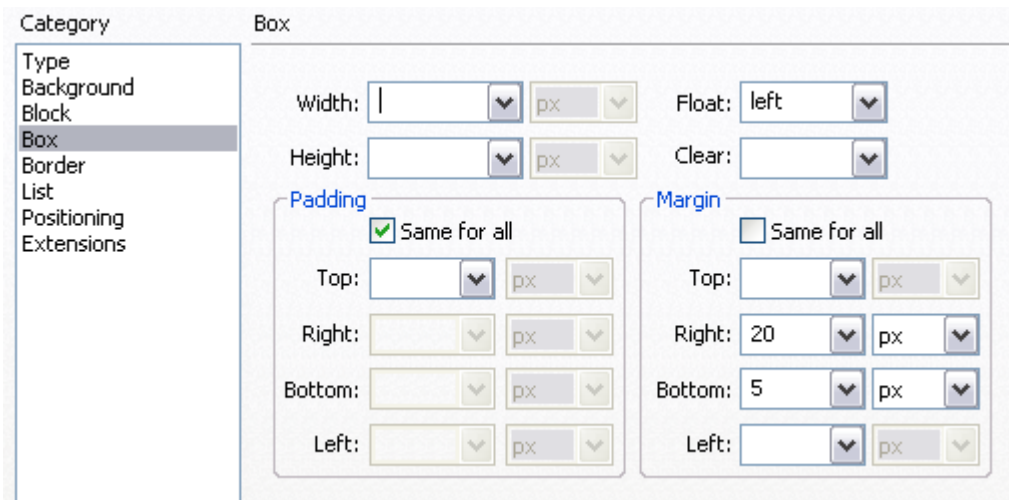
DW includes the style as an attribute of the `<p>` tag.

To apply the style to more text on the page, select the text as before and in the CSS Styles panel:

- Right click on the style name and choose Apply
- Cmd click (Mac) on the style name and choose Apply
- Select the style name in the CSS Styles panel and choose Apply from the panel menu.

Image margins and alignment

Create space (margin) around an image and align it with adjacent text. To do this, proceed as before to create a *class selector* and call it something like *image_1*. Go to the *Box* category, enter values for *Margin* and choose *left* for *Float*.



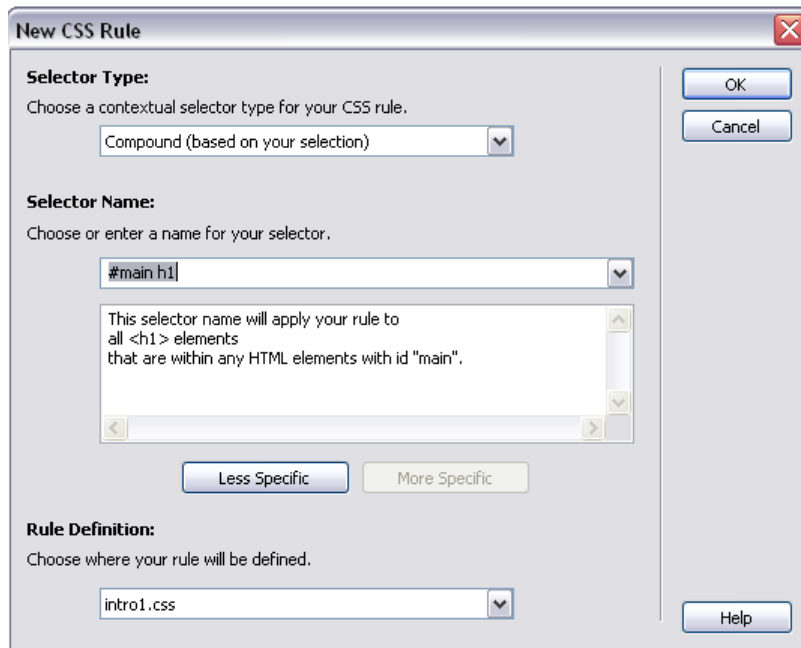
To apply the style to the image, select the image on the page and apply as described under *applying a class selector*.

The Float property aligns the image to the left of other elements. This property is often used for aligning div tags.

The Compound selector

In the Introduction to CSS exercise, a heading size (`<h1>` or `<h2>`) is used in both the *banner* and *content* divs. It is possible to make one of the duplicated heading sizes look different by using a *compound selector*.

In the *content* div, place the cursor within the heading. Create a New CSS Rule as before. The New CSS Rule window appears with compound as the Selector Type and the Selector Name written as `#content h1` or `#content h2`. If there are more references than this in the New CSS Rule dialogue then click on the *Less Specific* button or delete them from the *Selector Name* field.

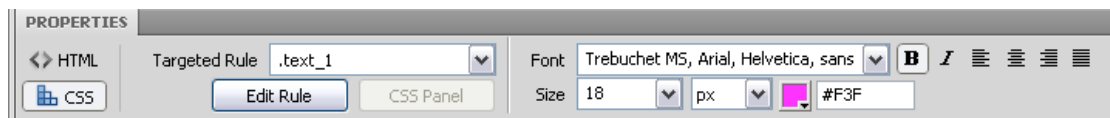


Click OK and style the heading as required.

This will also affect any other headings of that size in the content div but not that heading anywhere else on the page. Changing the appearance of the size of a heading on the page does not impact upon the importance of the heading as defined in the HTML.

Editing styles with the Properties panel

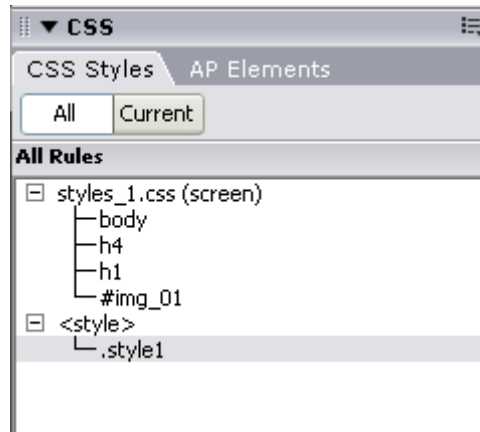
Class selectors can also be quickly edited from the Properties panel. Select the item on the page by highlighting or placing the cursor within it. In CSS view the style name should appear in the Targeted Rule field.



Change the properties for the style from the available text options or click on the Edit Rule button.

Avoid this

The next illustration shows the CSS Styles panel which includes an entry for another style sheet. This denotes that a style sheet has been established in the <head> of the HTML document. Avoid doing this at this stage as it will make things confusing.



This technique will be used later after completion of the web site, to illustrate the effect of the *cascade* in CSS.

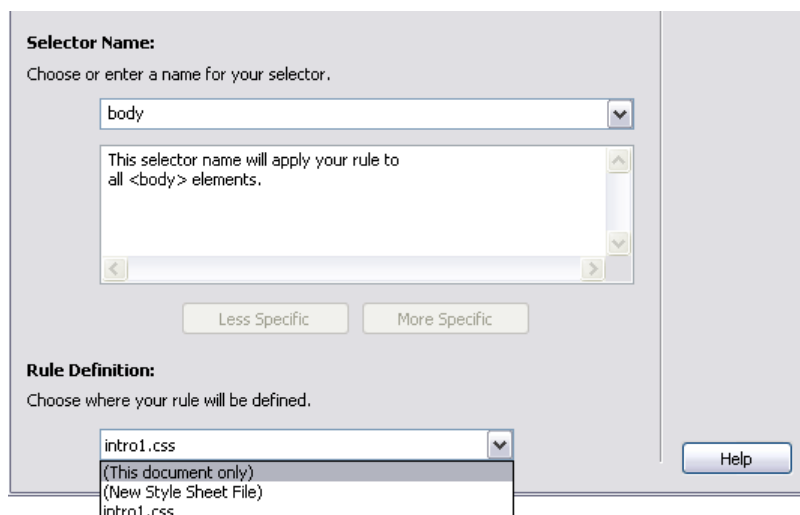
Creating the other pages

After completion of the first page go to File > Save As and save the page as the next page in the web site. This will entail replacing one of the blank HTML documents created as part of the Manage Sites process. This page will now have content from the first page along with the link to the style sheet and page styling.

Change the content of the page, such as title, headings and text to reflect the subject of the new page. Styles created for tags, text links, identifiers and compound selectors will still be apparent unless elements on the page have been removed or changed somehow. You will find it necessary to re-apply class selectors to the page, for instance where text has been changed.

The Cascade

Let us suppose you require one of your pages to have a different background to the others. This can be achieved by creating a *body* style in the head of that HTML document. Make the HTML document to be changed the active document in the work space. Proceed as when first creating the body style but this time choose to define it in *This document only* in the CSS Rule dialogue. Click OK



Select a different background colour and click OK.

This will override the background colour created for the *body* style in the *external style sheet* but the background image will still be present.

This illustrates one way of employing the *cascade* in CSS. If a style with the same name is defined in an external style sheet and in the <head> of a web page, any values for properties defined for the style in the <head> will override the corresponding properties in the external style sheet.

Properties that are not defined in the <head> will allow those in the external style sheet to flow or *cascade* through. This is why the background image still appears on the page.