

Cascading Style Sheets Overview

What are they?

- A collection of rules that define the appearance of an HTML document.
- Just like styles in print, CSS help maintain consistency within and across web pages.

Benefits of CSS

- Excellent control over type presentation—much more control than the standard Font tag.
- Allow you to mark up the appearance and structure of a page at the same time.
 - Done correctly, a page's structure (but not appearance) can be viewed in browsers that do not support CSS.
 - Font tags have no structural meaning in a web page, just visual.
- Help maintain visual consistency across pages in a web site.
- When using a visual HTML editor like Dreamweaver, style sheets can be applied similar to styles in Quark or InDesign.
- Font sizes in CSS, when specified in pixels, are generally consistent across operating systems.

Drawbacks of Using CSS

- Not supported in older browsers.
 - Only supported in Netscape 4 or higher, Internet Explorer 4 or higher.
- The behavior of most CSS options is not consistent across older browsers and operating systems.
- Style sheets can be difficult to learn and design with.

What Can You Control with CSS?

- There are over 70 visual options, including common typographic controls.
- However, browsers can only display a fraction of the available options.
- There are some typographic properties that work reliably across browsers and operating systems:

Property	Notes	Example
Typeface	Uses Font Lists	Verdana, Arial
Type Size	Specify in pixels	10px
Type Line Height	aka Leading; use pixels	16px
Type Weight	Specify font face weight	normal, bold
Type Style	Specify font face style	normal, italic, oblique
Type Color	Specify the font color	#FFCC66

Cascading Style Sheet Types

Overview

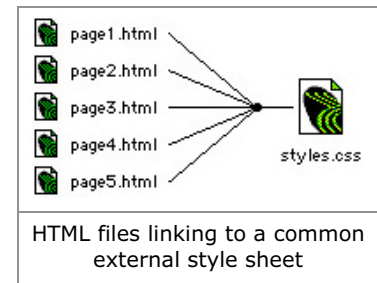
- When creating a new style in Dreamweaver, one of the options you are presented with is the *Define In* field.
- This allows you specify the type of style sheet to create and/or use.
 - If you select *New Style Sheet File* or an existing style sheet from the pull-down, you will be creating or using an **External** style sheet.
 - If you select *This Document Only*, you will create an **Embedded** style sheet.

Embedded

- Controls the appearance of only one page.
- Style sheet is embedded in the <head> container of the HTML page.
- Site-wide type appearance changes are more difficult when using this type.

External

- All pages within a site reference a common, centralized CSS file for style information.
- When a browser reads an HTML document with an external style sheet, the style sheet code is included in that page when displayed.
- Allows you to alter a single file to make type appearance changes throughout a site.
- Best for Web sites with more than a single page.
- File extension is .css



Inline

- Style sheet information is written directly to a tag that precedes the tag to be formatted (similar to a Font tag).
- Allows for the overriding of Embedded or External style sheets.
- Makes it very difficult to make page or site-wide formatting changes.
- Cannot specify structure and appearance at the same time.
- **Note:** Dreamweaver cannot create these types of style sheets.

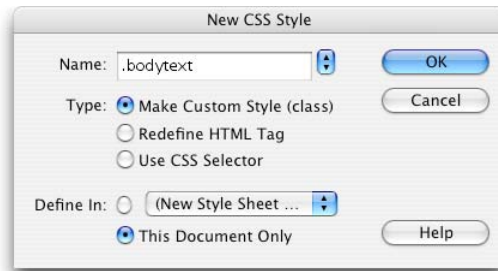
HTML Page Code Samples

Embedded & External
<pre><style type="text/css"><!-- h2 { font-family: Verdana, Arial; font-size: 16px; font-weight: bold } p { font-family: Verdana, Arial; font-size: 11px; line-height: 15px } .bodytext { font-family: Verdana, Arial; font-size: 11px; line-height: 15px } --> </style></pre>
Link to an External Style Sheet
<pre><head> <link rel="stylesheet" href="styles.css" type="text/css"> </head></pre>
Inline
<pre><p style="font-family: Verdana, Arial; font-size: 12px;">Hello World</p></pre>

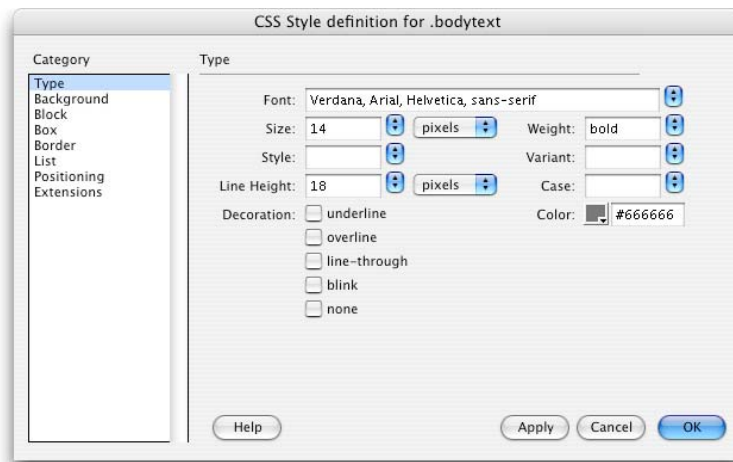
CSS Use in Dreamweaver

Custom Styles

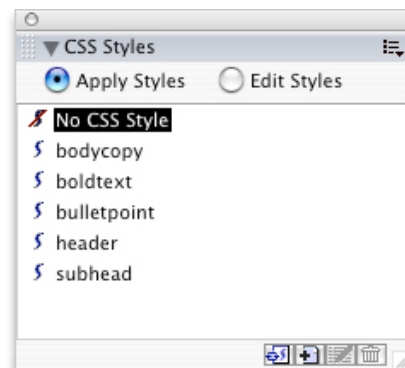
- Allow you to selectively apply text formatting to an HTML page.
- Styles are applied to the current selected text or paragraph.
- Custom styles are similar to character and paragraph-level style sheets in InDesign or Quark.
- Officially Custom Styles are called *classes*.
- To define a style in Dreamweaver:
 - Select Text > CSS Styles > New CSS Style...
 - Enter a name for this style, select Make Custom Style (class) and click OK



- Dreamweaver Style Definition—Type panel:
 - Note: This panel is the same for each of the three different ways to define styles in Dreamweaver.

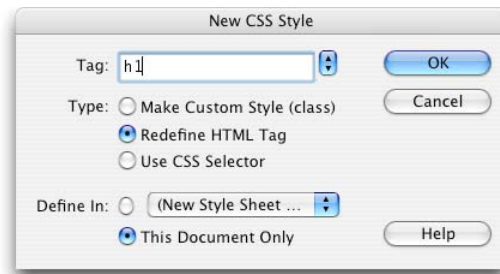


- Again, there are many, many other options, but the ones listed in the chart on page one are the most reliable (and most useful) in real-world use.
- Applying Custom Styles:
 - To apply to an entire paragraph at once, place the cursor in the desired paragraph, then select the style to apply.
 - To apply to only specific words or characters, select the text you wish to change, then select the style to apply.
- Text tagged with a specific style will automatically update when the style is edited. This is true of both embedded and external style sheets, though embedded only update type on the current page.



Redefining HTML Tags

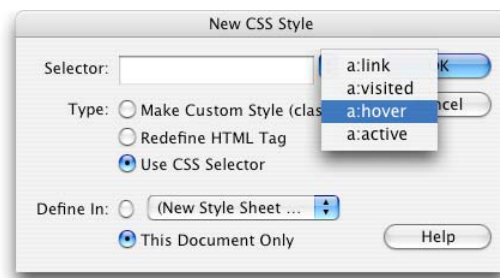
- Allows you to change the appearance of standard HTML tags.
 - Examples: <h1> <h2> <h3> <p> <body> <td>
- One advantage to this method is that the document structure is visually maintained in older browsers, although type will not appear as intended.
- To define in Dreamweaver:
 - Select Text > CSS Styles > New CSS Style...
 - Select Redefine HTML Tag.
 - Select a tag to edit from the pull-down to the right and click OK.



- Complete the Style Definition panels as you did when creating a Custom Style.

Using the CSS Selector

- The Use CSS Selector allows access to some of the more advanced features of cascading style sheets.
- One feature is the ability to modify multiple HTML tags at once by typing in tags and separating them with commas. (<h1>, <h2>, <p>)
- Use CSS Selector also allows access to CSS pseudo-classes.
 - Dreamweaver supplies a pull-down list of a: element options to allow for easy modification of the presentation of links.
- Common Uses:
 - Using a:link, you can remove the default underline of a text link for all links on a page or site. Select a:link and click OK. Under Type > Decoration, select the checkbox next to None.
 - The a:hover selector allows you to control the color of a text link when a user mouses over a link. Select a:hover and click OK, and select a custom color under Type > Color. You can also show or hide a link's underline by selecting Type > Decoration > None (to hide on mouse over) or Type > Decoration > Underline (to show on mouse over).
- To define in Dreamweaver:
 - Select Text > CSS Styles > New CSS Style...
 - Select Use CSS Selector.
 - Select an a tag to edit from the pull-down menu and click OK.



- Complete the Style Definition panels as you did when creating a Custom Style.