

Lesson 2-8: Work with CSS

note

Most developers are not CSS experts

As only very basic CSS will be covered in this book, you might not feel entirely confident that you understand it fully.

The important thing to take from the CSS lessons is an appreciation of how a professional web designer uses CSS to design attractive and consistent web pages. You do not need an in-depth understanding of CSS in order to work through the rest of this book.

Journalists do not get involved with the page layouts of newspapers. This is left to typesetters and page layout artists. But the journalist still needs to know what is possible.

In the same way it isn't essential for a web developer to cultivate extensive web design skills. A reasonable knowledge of how the technologies work will suffice.

note

CSS can also be used to layout pages

You've already discovered HTML tables. Before the advent of CSS most web designers used HTML tables (usually with invisible borders) to arrange their pages neatly into columns.

There is now a new way of arranging page elements that relies entirely upon CSS properties.

Many expert web designers have now abandoned the earlier table-based layouts and create their layouts entirely with CSS.

CSS is the language used to define the styles of elements on modern web pages. CSS has over a hundred different properties you can use to define styles and there are many different CSS techniques used to create the pages you see on the Internet.

Covering every CSS property and technique would be the subject matter for an entire book in itself, but you will briefly cover some of the most important ones in this lesson.

- 1 Open *HTMLTest* from your sample files folder.
- 2 Open *csstest.aspx* in *Source* view.
- 3 Link the *csstest.css* stylesheet from the *styles* folder.

Add the following tag to the page's head section (anywhere in the area between the `<head>` and `</head>` tags):

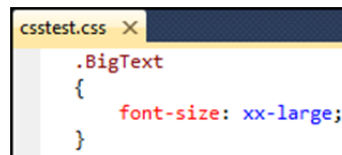
```
<link rel="Stylesheet" href="/styles/csstest.css" />
```

- 4 Create a CSS class.

CSS classes are ways of grouping style properties together in CSS and giving them a name. Elements on your page can then be referenced to the name of the class in order to use its styles.

1. Double-click on *csstest.css* in the *Styles* folder to open it for editing. Note that the file is currently empty.
2. Add the following text to the CSS file:

```
.BigText
{
    font-size: xx-large;
}
```



You just created a CSS class called *BigText* that makes the text of any HTML tag that references it extra, extra large.

- 5 Assign the *BigText* class to an HTML tag.

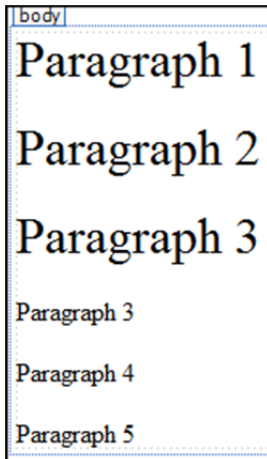
Now that you've created a class, you need to assign it to an element on the page for it to affect anything.

1. Open *csstest.aspx* in *Source* view.
2. Change the line that says `<div id="Div1">` to the following:

```
<div id="Div1" class="BigText">
```

```
<p>Paragraph 1</p>
<p>Paragraph 2</p>
<p>Paragraph 3</p>
</div>
```

Note that CSS class names are case sensitive so *bigtext* wouldn't work.



- Switch to *Design* view.

You'll see that the text of all of the elements nested inside *Div1* has been made extra, extra large.

6 Create a CSS identifier.

Identifiers are similar to classes, but instead of using the *class* property they automatically attach themselves to any element with the same *ID* property. It is easier to understand identifiers by seeing them in action:

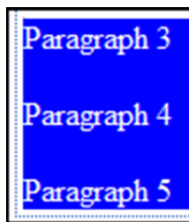
- Open *csstest.css*.
- Add the following text:

```
#Div2
{
    color: White;
    background-color: Blue;
}
```

```
.BigText
{
    font-size: xx-large;
}
#Div2
{
    color: White;
    background-color: Blue;
}
```

- Switch back to *csstest.aspx* in *Design* view.

As you can see, the identifier has set the text color to white and the background color to blue for all elements within the *div* tags that have the ID *Div2*.



7 Use inline CSS.

Although it's best practice to keep all of your styles in separate CSS files, you can also place CSS code directly into the *style* property of an HTML tag.

- Switch back to the *Source* view of *csstest.aspx*.
- Change the code of `<p>Paragraph 1</p>` to the following:

```
<p style="font-size: xx-small">Paragraph 1</p>
```

```
<div id="Div1" class="BigText">
  <p style="font-size: xx-small">Paragraph 1</p>
  <p>Paragraph 2</p>
  <p>Paragraph 3</p>
</div>
```

- Switch back to *Design* view.

You'll see that *Paragraph 1* now has smaller text than the other paragraphs.

Inline CSS always overrides any style set by the *class* property.

ASP.NET often automatically generates inline CSS when converting ASP.NET controls into HTML code.

