CSS Selectors

In the previous chapter, you learned that CSS selectors are used to identify (or "select") elements on an HTML page so that they can be styled.

There are three types of CSS selectors:

- Tag selectors
- Classes
- IDs

Tag selectors

All of the styles in your code so far have used tag selectors. We applied the styles to specific HTML elements, such as **body**, **p**, or **h1**. You can use any HTML element as a selector. The problem with the tag selectors is that a style defined for an element is applied to every occurrence of that element in the document.

Class selector

Sometimes you would like to create your own special CSS rule that you will apply to some elements on a page, but not to others.

Let's say, you would like to emphasize some of your paragraphs, but not all of them. In this case, you wouldn't want to use <p> as a selector, because that would apply the style to all of the paragraphs.

In this case, you can create a special type of selector called a **class**, which you can apply to the paragraphs you want, or even other elements, such as <ul> or <blockquote>.

Class – is a "free agent" rule that can be applied to any of tags at your discretion. To define a class, you simply give the class name (some descriptive word, such as*important*) and add a period (.) before the name of the selector.

Example:

```
.important {
font-size:large; color:#FF0000;
}
```

To apply a class to an element, use ***class*** attribute with the element you would like to format:

Example:

<p class="important">Important text **</p>**

Notice, that the dot (.) is not used when you apply the class to the paragraph.

You can apply the same class to multiple different tags on the same page, for example, you can apply the *.important* class to a separate fragment of text:

<p>You cannot have **<span class=”important”>*white spaces*</span> i**n the class names**</p>**

Display:

You cannot have white spaces in the class names

You cannot have white spaces in the class names.
Avoid starting class names with numbers
Use meaningful descriptive names, such as .note, .important, .article, and so on.
Remember, class names are case sensitive.

ID selectors

An **id** selector functions in much the same way that a class does, but it gives a selector a unique name, which is useful for building a web page layout blocks, such as header, footer, or navbar. Id selectors are also used in **Dynamic HTML**, to specify an object that you plan to change or manipulate using JavaScript or VBScript.

Unlike a class, you can use a specific id only once on a page.
If you plan to use CSS style more than once on a page, use a class rather than an id.

Id name must begin with a pound sign (#).

```
#footer{
width:800px;
height:25px;
       }
```

You can apply **id** to an element using ***id*** attribute.

<div id=”footer”> home | about us | our services | contact us**</div>**

You cannot have white spaces in the id names
Avoid starting id names with numbers
Use unique descriptive names, such as #header or #masthead, #sidebar, #navbar, and etc.
Remember, id names are case sensitive

Advanced selectors

Group selectors

If you want to apply the same styles to a group of different elements, you can use a list of selectors, separated by commas:

```
p, li, blockquote {
line-height: 2;
font-family: Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
}
```

Defining styles for tags in context (Compound or descendant Selectors)

You can also identify selectors according to their parent elements. For example, if you need to set a border for all of the paragraphs located inside of the division (<div>) that has id *leftColumn*, you could use the following:

```
#leftColumn  p {
border: dotted  1px #777;
}
```

This rule says that all the paragraphs that have a parent with the id l*eftColumn* will have a dotted gray border around them (see code below)

```
<div id="leftColumn">
<p>This  paragraph will have a  gray dotted border</p>
</div>
```

All other paragraphs that are outside of the *leftColumn*, will not be changed.

Using pseudo classes

You can also use part of an element – that is, the first line or the first letter – as a selector We call this selectors **pseudo classes**. To use the first line as a selector, type the name of the element whose first lane you want to format, followed by a colon:

```
p:first-line  { color:red;}
p:first-letter  {font-size:xx-large}
```

Using dependent styles

If you would like to create a class that you want to apply to only specific tags, use the following selector:

```
p.important (color:red;}
```

A dependent class can only be used with a particular HTML tag. In practice this isn't very useful, as using a class will do exactly the same job. The only reason you might want to use this is if you want to give the same class name to two different rules, applied to two different HTML tags:

```
em.important {color:blue;}
```