

Advancing the Effective
Use of Technology in Education

NISD Technology Services

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CASCADING STYLE SHEETS ESSENTIALS



Auxiliary & Classified Staff
Campus Administrators
District Administrators & Professional Staff
Teachers

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INTRODUCTION

Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) are powerful tools used to determine the appearance of Web pages. They were created to address an increasing number of non-standard HTML tags that were being used to achieve various visual effects, often with inconsistent results. Style sheets offer consistency and far more power and flexibility than “pure” HTML. Style sheets are also the standard method for controlling the appearance of text in Web pages.

Macromedia Dreamweaver makes it easy to integrate CSS into Web pages and sites. Web designers can also write CSS directly in the HTML code.

CSS also allow you to update a single page, a few pages, or a whole website much faster and more easily than ever before. An external CSS file can be used to define a set of rules for multiple pages. Making a change to a rule applies the change to every page that uses that rule.

Why “Cascading?”

Cascading refers to the way that Web browsers treat the three kinds of style sheets. There is a “cascade” of style sheets, in which the Web browser resolves any conflicts between style sheets by giving preference to some style sheets. The three types of CSS are:

External style sheets, which can be used by one Web page or an entire Web site. A single page can also link to more than one style sheet. The browser reads the style sheet(s) and uses the style sheet instructions to format the page.

Embedded style sheets are part of the the code of a single Web page. The browser gives preference to embedded style sheets, so any embedded instructions that conflict with external style sheets will override the external CSS.

Inline styles are commands within an HTML tag. These are given the highest priority by the browser, meaning that they override both external style sheets as well as embedded styles.

What You Will Learn

In this course, you will learn to create embedded and external style sheets, and how to modify existing style sheets.

Your learning experiences will include:

Creating and editing an external style sheet, using Dreamweaver

Modifying the way that HTML tags (such as headings) display

Using CSS to bring new fonts into your Web pages

Replacing time-consuming header images with simple, easy CSS page headings

EMBEDDED STYLE SHEETS

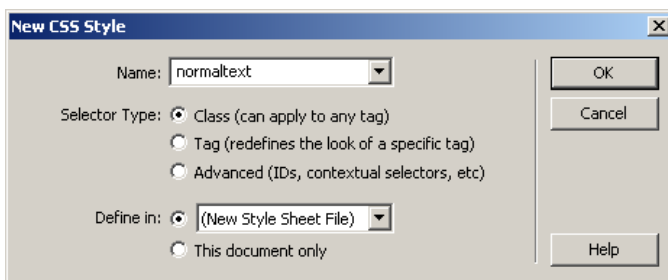
Embedded style sheets affect only the Web page that they're embedded in, so they do not offer the easy updates of the external style sheets. The advantages of embedded style sheets are convenience, if only one or two pages are being created, and the ability to create a custom set of styles for a particular page. Best of all, you can still link to an external style sheet and embed just the styles you need for that page.

Embedded style sheets appear in the <head> of a Web page. They are written within non-displaying comments, so that the style sheets will not accidentally be displayed as page content, even in older browsers that may not recognize the style sheet.

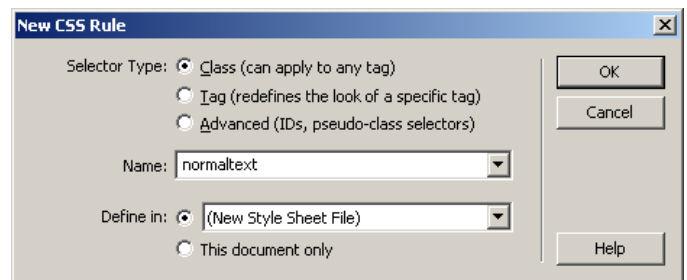
Creating a New Style (also called a Rule) with Dreamweaver

- 1 If the CSS Panel is not visible, choose the **Windows** menu and select **CSS Styles**.
- 2 Click the **New CSS Style** icon (+).
- 3 Fill out the **New CSS Style** (MX 2004) or **New CSS Rule** (Dreamweaver 8) window as shown below.

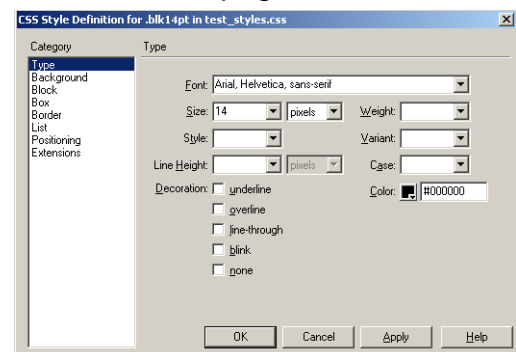
**New CSS Style window
(Dreamweaver MX 2004)**





**New CSS Rule window
(Dreamweaver 8)**





- 4 Give it a descriptive name, such as **normaltext**.
- 5 Under Type, select **Class**.
- 6 For Define In: choose **(New Style Sheet File)**, so that the style will be available to other Web pages in your site. If you choose **This Document Only**, the CSS information will be saved in the <head> of the document and will not be available for use in other pages.
- 7 Click **[OK]**.
- 8 If you choose **(New Style Sheet File)**, a **Save Style Sheet File As** window will appear. The file will contain your style sheets, so give it a general name, such as **blattman_styles**. You can have more than one style sheet file, though.
- 9 In the CSS Style Definitions window, fill in the following information for the new style, including **Font: Arial, Size: 14 pixels, Color: Black**.

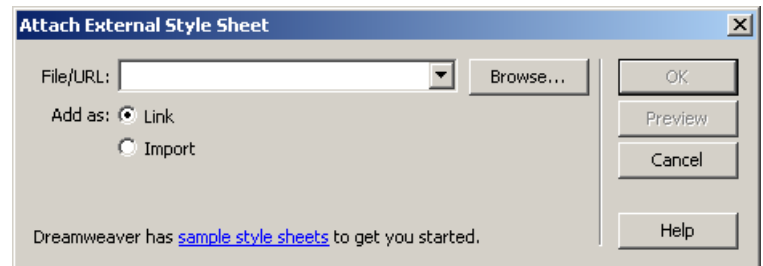


If you need to, you can come back later and edit your style by choosing the style, and clicking the **Edit Style** () icon.


- 1  To use your new style, highlight some text and click on the style – either in the Properties, or in the CSS Panel -- to apply it to the text.

Attaching an External Style Sheet in Dreamweaver


- 1 In the CSS Styles panel, click the **Attach Style Sheet** icon ( in MX 2004;  in Dreamweaver 8).
- 2 The Attach External Style Sheet window will appear. Choose the **Link** radio button.
- 3 Click the [**Browse**] button and find the external style sheet. Click the [**OK**] button to select it.
- 4 Click the [**OK**] button to close the Attach External Style Sheet window.



Modifying Existing Style Sheets

- 1 In the CSS Styles panel, select a style to modify.
- 2 Click the Edit Style... () icon.

Adding a New Style to an Existing Style Sheet

- 1 Open the CSS Styles panel.
- 2 Click the New CSS Style icon () and follow the steps outline above in **Creating a New Style**.

DESIGNING FOR ACCESSIBILITY: LEARNING TO LOVE “EM”

The **em** is a relative measure of size for fonts. In style sheets, its size refers to its “parent” element. Think of it this way, an em is expressed in terms of its size in relation to the prevailing text. For example, we could use a style to modify the (bold text) tag, so that its size was 1.1 ems. All


text in the page that had been made bold (strong) would appear as bold text, 1.1 times the size of the regular text.

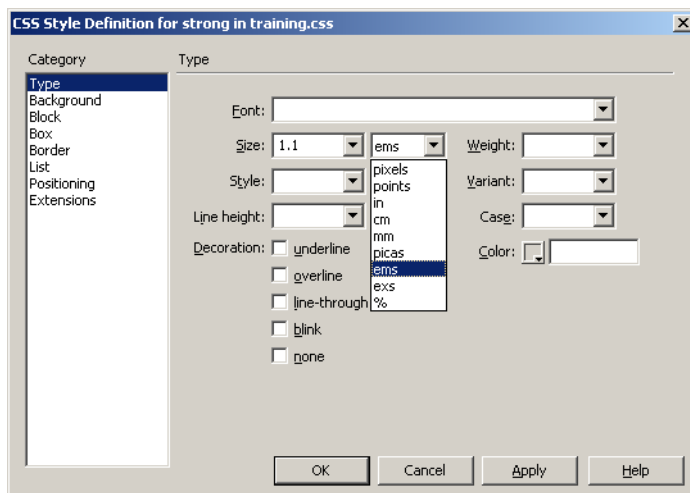
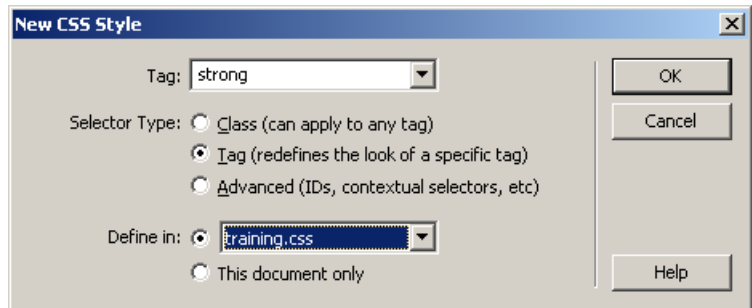
The biggest advantage of using ems as a unit of measure is that Internet Explorer is able to resize CSS text when it's measured in ems. Text defined in pixels or points cannot be resized by Internet Explorer.

Let's try creating the above example in Dreamweaver. The example below shows MX 2004, but Dreamweaver 8 is similar.

Using "ems" in Style Sheets

In this example, we redefine the way that bold-face text is displayed, with the size defined in ems.

- 1 Open the CSS Styles panel.
- 2 Click the **New CSS Style** icon ().
- 3 Under Selector Type, choose **Tag**.
- 4 The drop-down menu at the top of the small window will change to Tag. Select **strong**.
- 5 Use the **Define In** drop-down menu to select the external style sheet you created earlier.
- 6 Click **[OK]**.
- 7 In the Size box, type **1.1** and choose **ems** from the drop-down menu.



Notice in this example, that all you had to define was the size of the text and the measurement. It shows how CSS can be used in a very simple way to make some rules for how your Web page will display.

This style will affect all bold text in the Web page. With this style, the bold text will have the same font as the text surrounding it. The bold text will be slightly larger than the text around it.

As the previous example shows, you can redefine almost any tag to display in almost any way, including font, color, background, font weight, background and much more.

Independent Practice: Add a New Style to Your Style Sheet

- 1 Open the CSS Panel.
- 2 Click the **New CSS Style** icon (+).
- 3 Choose **Class** for Selector Type.
- 4 Name the new style **smalltext**.
- 5 Define it in your existing style sheet.
- 6 Click **[OK]**.
- 7 In the Style Definition window, set the Size to **.8ems**.
- 8 Click **[OK]**.
- 9 Highlight the copyright statement at the bottom of the page and choose **smalltext** from the **Styles** drop-down in the Properties.

CHANGING THE “DEFAULT” FONT OF A WEB PAGE

Instead of having to highlight all of the text in a page, why not use a style sheet to change it all at once? You can still highlight any text and apply a different style at any time, and redefined features (such as the bold text in a previous exercise) will still work.

Set a Style for the Body Text


The <body> tag in a Web page is where the content is placed. By redefining the body text, you can affect all of the text in the page. Effectively, you are setting the “default” text, using a style sheet.

- 1 Open the CSS Panel.
- 2 Click the **New CSS Style** icon (+).
- 3 Choose **Tag** for Selector Type.
- 4 Select **body** from the Tag pull-down menu.
- 5 Define the style in your existing style sheet.
- 6 Click **[OK]**.
- 7 In the CSS Style Definition window, choose **Arial** for the font.
- 8 Type **1.0** in the Size box, and choose **ems** from the pull-down next to it.
- 9 Click **[OK]** and watch as all the text in the Web page changes to the Arial font!

BORDERS

Borders can be used with various elements in a Web page, such as tables and images. CSS borders give you far more choices in color, style, and how the border is displayed.


Borders for Images or Tables

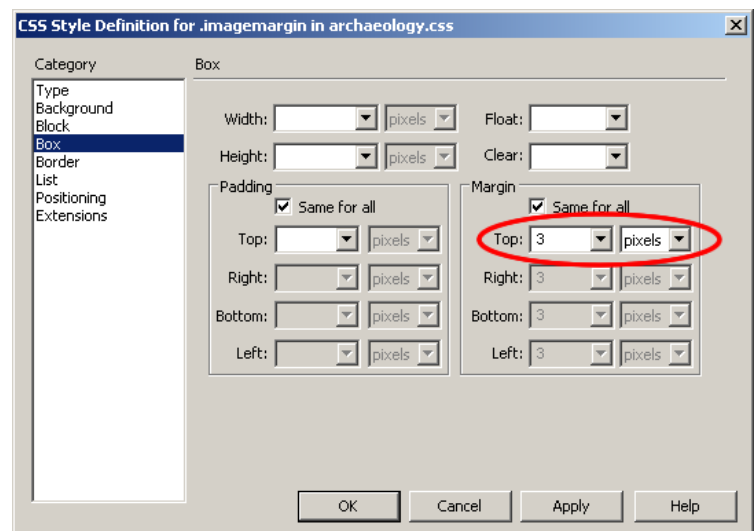
- 1 Click the New CSS Style icon ().
- 2 Choose Class under Selector Type, and name the style **imageborder**.
- 3 Define it in your existing style sheet.
- 4 Click **[OK]**.
- 5 In the CSS Style Definition window, choose **Border** for the Category.
- 6 Set the Style to **solid**, the Width to **thin**, and use the Color picker to select a **dark blue** color. Note that all four sides are automatically changed together.
- 7 Click **[OK]**.
- 8 Click one of the photos, then select **imageborder** from the **Class** drop-down menu in the Properties.

MARGINS

Most people think of margins in terms of pages, but with style sheets, margins can be applied to various page elements. Margins can be extremely useful to keep text from touching images and other page objects in a Web page.

Margins for Images

- 1 Click the New CSS Style icon ().
- 2 Choose Class under Selector Type, and name the style **imagemargin**.
- 3 Define it in your existing style sheet and click **[OK]**.
- 4 In the CSS Style Definition window, choose **Box** for the Category.
- 5 In the Margin section of the window, set the Top margin to **3 pixels**. Make sure the **Same for all** box is checked.
- 6 Click **[OK]**.
- 7 Click the image that you added the border to, and under **Class** in the Properties, choose **None**.
- 8 Now, with the image still selected, click the **Class** drop-down again and choose **imagemargin**. The text should be forced a few pixels away from the image.




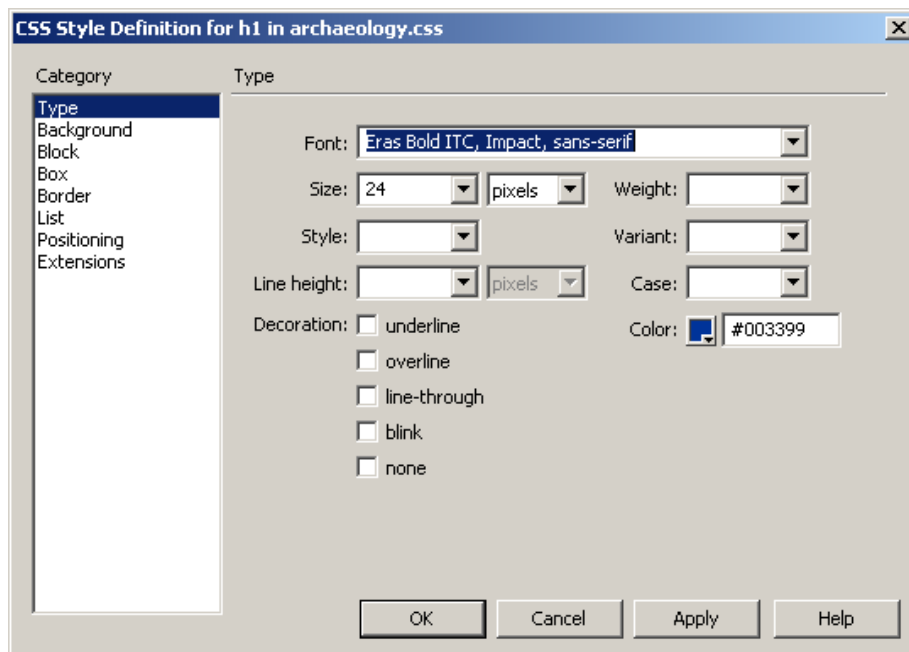
REDEFINING WEB PAGE HEADINGS

Web designers often use a lot of time making images of text for page headings, using programs like Fireworks or Photoshop. One reason for this is that standard Web (HTML) headings do not have many options in the way that they can be displayed. CSS changes this situation, and makes it easy to create headings that look the way that you want them to look, in much less time than it takes to make headings in Fireworks or Photoshop.

As an additional benefit, the use of descriptive headings in a Web page increases that page's chance of being found with a search engine such as Google. It also makes your headings quick and easy to edit.

Create a Page Heading in CSS

- 1 Click the New CSS Style icon ().
- 2 Choose **Tag** for Selector Type and select **h1** from the Tag pull-down menu.
- 3 Define it in your existing style sheet and click **[OK]**.



- 4 In the **Type** Category, set the following attributes:
 - a. Font: **"Eras Bold ITC", Impact, sans-serif**
Note: Type the font **exactly** as shown above.
 - b. Size: **24**
 - c. Color: **#003399** (a dark blue)
- 5 Click **[OK]**.

Note that the name of the font -- **Eras Bold ITC** -- must be in quotes, because it is more than one word. **Sans-serif** doesn't count, because it has a dash instead of a space between the words.

Go to your Web page. If we did this right, the page heading is now different.

NOTES: