

# Dreamweaver MX 2004® Cascading Style Sheets

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*A Workshop for San Diego State University Students*



## **Where to Find Help When You Need It**

### **Student Computer Help Web Site**

The computer help web site for students provides information about the type of help you can get and locations where help is available. To find this information, look to: <http://rohan.sdsu.edu/~students>

### *Help from the BATS Web Page*

BATS (Baseline Access, Training and Support) is a California State University initiative to provide all students, faculty, and staff with "baseline" access to information resources via networks, training in the uses of baseline hardware and software systems, and ongoing professional and technical support for utilization of computer resources at San Diego State University. You can access the BATS Web Page by pointing your browser to: <http://rohan.sdsu.edu/~bats/>

### *Help in the Love Library Student Computing Lab*

The Student Computing Lab's purpose is to facilitate students in completing assigned class work, as well as provide assistance to students having computer problems relating to the Internet, Netscape, SPSS, File Transfers, PC Operating Systems, Microsoft Office Software and Business Databases.

**Location:** 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Love Library building in LL-224  
**Hours:** 10:00am – midnight Sunday  
7:00am – midnight Monday - Thursday  
7:00am – 6:00pm Friday  
10:00 am – 6:00pm Saturday

### *Help from the Student Computing Help Desk*

**Phone:** 594-3189  
**Location:** Love Library 220  
**Hours:** 8:00am – 4:30pm Monday  
8:00am – 4:30pm Tuesday  
8:00am – 7:30pm Wednesday  
8:00am – 7:30pm Thursday  
8:00am – 4:30pm Friday  
**E-mail:** [problems@rohan.sdsu.edu](mailto:problems@rohan.sdsu.edu)

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## Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) Introduction

When working with web pages, a style sheet helps to define a web page's formatting. When you setup a style sheet, you may specify such parameters as the font size, background color, image positioning, link appearance and more. Style sheets are useful because you can use the same style sheet for many web pages. For example, you could define one style within your style sheet that controls the look of heading text for all pages within your web site.

If you decide that all heading text within all pages of your site should be changed from blue to red, this change can be done quickly by changing one definition (rule) in the style sheet. This will affect all heading text in your site, changing it from blue to red in seconds.

Specifically, style sheets allow for

- Commands (definitions or rules) for specifying and applying font characteristics
- Traditional layout measurement and terminology (examples of this are font point sizes similar to word processors such as 8, 10, and 12 points. Another example of this is line spacing (know as leading in traditional layout), which can also be set to specific point sizes.
- Pinpoint precision for page layout

## How Does It Work?

A style sheet is a collection of definitions or rules. These definitions are often kept in the <head> portion of a single web page or in a peripheral linked style sheet document — an *External Style Sheet*. Note that they can also be in the <body> portion of a web page where most of the pages content is located.

External style sheets are often the best approach because changes to the external style sheet can affect all pages in your site, giving your site a consistent look, while saving you time.

These rules are applied to sections of your page using one of Dreamweaver's Style functions or windows. Dreamweaver actually offers several ways to apply a style. First we will look at some style rules and then how to apply them.

### **Browser Types and Styles**

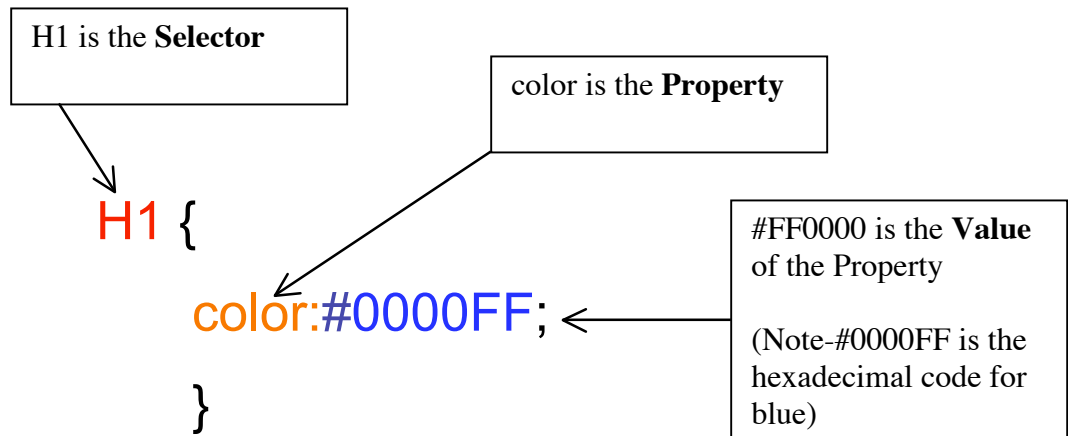
You may have heard that not all browser interpret CSS the same way. And, some older browsers do not even recognize many styles. Yes it is true; styles are not always interpreted the same way and many older browsers don't understand styles. Netscape 4.x has especially poor CSS support.

### **Checking Your Styles**

Dreamweaver has a tool that allows you to check browser support for any page you are working on. When working with CSS, it is highly recommended that you do this check. See the Dreamweaver help system (Help > Using Dreamweaver) and do a search on *Checking for browser compatibility* for details on how check your page.

## Style Rules

Dreamweaver can create the style rules for you; however, it is useful to know how rules are constructed. Style rules are made of three basic parts: A **Selector**, a **Property**, and a Property's **Value**. Below is an example of a style rule:



This rule states that all Heading One text will be blue in color. Note that the Property and its Value are called a *Declaration*. One rule can have several Declarations. These declarations are separated by semicolons:

```
H1 {  
  color:#0000FF;  
  font-size: 18pt;  
}
```

This rule states that all Heading One text will be blue and 18 point size.

### Why Cascading?

The term Cascading refers to how style rules are applied and interact. As mentioned previously, style rules can be located in three different places: In the body <body> of the document, in the head <head> portion of the document, and

in a linked external sheet. Sometimes a style rule can exist in two places. For example, a style rule that controls the color of paragraph text may exist in both the external style sheet and the body of a document. This might become a problem, especially if one rule designates paragraph text as being red and the other designates rule paragraph text as being blue. However, style rules cascade, meaning that local rules take precedence over general rules. In other words, whichever rule is closest to the paragraph itself takes precedence. Because of this, rules in the *body* of the document (where the paragraph exists) take precedence over rules in the *head* of the document and also the *external style sheet*. Additionally, rules in the *head* of the document take precedence over rules in the *external style sheet*.

### **External, Internal, and Embedded (Inline) Styles**

Style rules located in an external style sheet are called External Styles. Style rules located in the <head> portion of a web page are called Internal Styles. Style rules located in the <body> of a document are called Embedded Styles.

#### **Which Type of Style Should I Use?**

At first glance, local styles may appear more useful than more general peripheral styles. Actually, the opposite tends to be true. External style sheets can be the most useful, especially when managing a big web site. External style sheets also help people with disabilities read your web page. However, Internal and Embedded styles are useful if you need to make a change only to a single object on a single page.

## Dreamweaver's Style Tools

Dreamweaver has four main style tools:

<b>CSS Styles Panel</b>	Displays all styles attached to the current page and allows for modification.
<b>Edit Style Sheet dialog box</b>	Allows you to manage groups of styles or style sheets.
<b>Style Definition dialog box</b>	Displays the style definitions themselves.
<b>Relevant Styles Tab</b>	Displays styles currently applied to a selected tag.

## Creating Styles

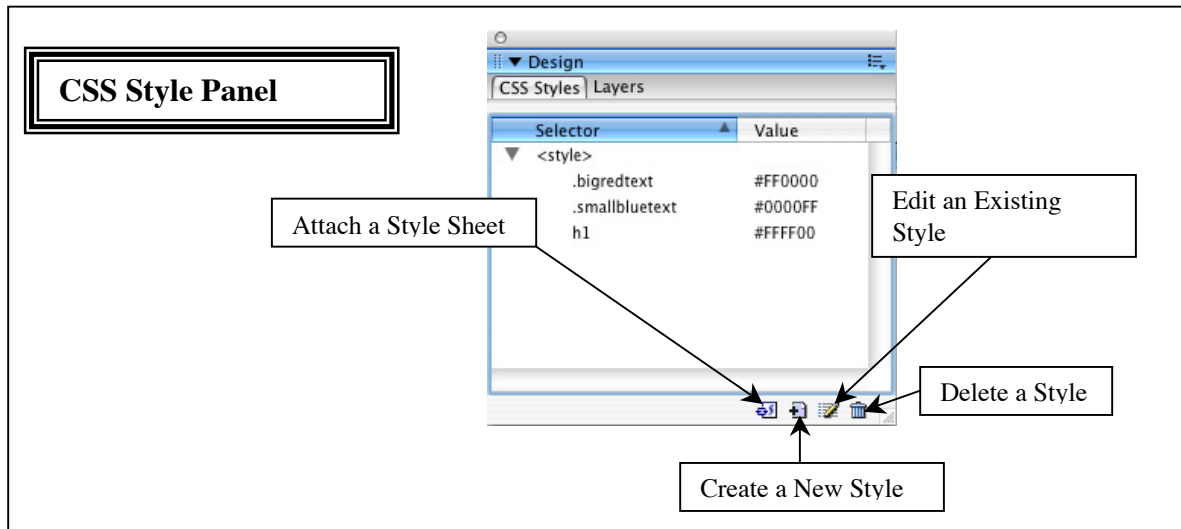
### Creating Styles Automatically

Dreamweaver can automatically create styles for you. One of the easiest ways to do this is through the Properties Inspector. For example, if you highlight text and change the color to red, Dreamweaver creates a style called "style 1" that can be seen on the Properties Inspector's drop-down style list. As you continue to format text, Dreamweaver creates more automatic styles. Dreamweaver is actually creating *Internal Styles* with definitions located in the <head> portion of the document

*Note that to create styles in this fashion (automatically), you must have the "Use CSS instead of HTML Tags" preference checked, which is located in the Dreamweaver Preferences "General" category, and also create a new document.*

## Creating Styles Manually

Dreamweaver offers the ability to create or define styles manually. This option offers the greatest control over your style and an enormous array of style options.



To create a style manually:

- Click the New CSS Style button on the CSS Style Panel  
*A New CSS Style dialog box will open*
- Choose where you would like the style definitions to be located: Define in: “New Style Sheet File” or “This document only”
- Choose “Class” or “Tag” (See the section of this handout on *Custom Classes* for a comparison of these two types of styles)
  - If you choose a custom class, name your custom class starting with a period e.g., **.bigredtext**
  - If you choose **TAG**, then choose a tag type from the drop down menu within this same window
- Choose your style options in the CSS Style Definition dialog box that should now be visible (See the section in this handout on *Style Options*)

## Changing to a Different Style

Changing to a different style is also easy within Dreamweaver. To change a style, click inside any element that has a style applied to it (Make sure NOT to

highlight it-highlighting a style creates messy, nested styles) and choose a different style from the Properties Inspector or CSS Style panel.

### Removing the Application of a Style

To remove the application of a style, click inside any element that has a style applied to it (Make sure NOT to highlight it-highlighting a style creates messy, nested styles) and choose **None** from the Properties Inspector or CSS Style panel.

### Editing or Deleting a Style

Keep in mind that removing the application of a style removes the application of a style from just a particular element. The style definition still remains in the web document or external style sheet. To delete a style definition, highlight the style in the CSS Panel and click on the trash can within the same panel.

## Custom Classes

Remember our previous example of a style that changed all heading one <H1> text blue:

```
H1 {  
    color:#0000FF;  
}
```

This style used a TAG selector and, therefore, applies to a specific HTML tag wherever it occurs on a page, automatically.

Styles created through the Properties Inspector (and, if specifically chosen, within the CSS Styles Panel) are actually Custom Class Styles. What is a Custom Class? These are styles that are not design to be applied to any specific tag but can be used where ever you manually apply them. Below is an example of a custom class style rule. Note that the selector starts with a period and that this rule does not apply to any specific html tag:

```
.bigredtext {  
    font-size:36pt;  
    color:#FF0000;  
}
```

The above rule states that any text that has this style applied to it will be point size 36 and red in color.

## Exporting Styles

When Dreamweaver auto generates a style the definition is kept in the <head> of the document. This can also occur when you manually create a style through the CSS styles panel. These style definitions can only be applied to the page that they occur on. You can, however, export these *Internal Styles* to an *External Style Sheet*. Here is how it is done:

- With the page containing the styles you would like to export open, choose File>Export>CSS

This creates an External Style Sheet with your definitions. However, the original style definitions are still in the <head> portion of your document and should be deleted. To delete these Internal Styles:

- Open the CSS Styles Panel
- Choose each style and click the trash can icon in the same window

You will now need to re-link your exported style sheet:

- Within the CSS Styles Panel, click the Attach Style Sheet button
- Browse and choose your recently exported style sheet

## Style Options

When you create a style via the CSS Styles panel, the CSS Style Definition dialog box opens. The CSS Style Definition dialog box offers a wide array of style options. However, there are eight main categories:

<b>Type</b>	Specifies the appearance and layout of type
<b>Background</b>	Specifies the appearance of a background. Note this can be applied to the page background, type, tables, table cells, and more
<b>Block</b>	Specifies the paragraph appearance and layout and includes more type options
<b>Box</b>	Specifies the placement and settings for page elements (mostly images)
<b>Border</b>	Specifies parameters for borders (borders can be around text, image, and page elements)
<b>List</b>	Gives you greater control of lists
<b>Positioning</b>	Specifies the exact position of objects such as blocks of text
<b>Extensions</b>	Allows you to format a page for print, apply special effects to images, and more (Most CSS settings located here are poorly supported)

## Handout References

### **Dreamweaver MX 2004 Bible**

Joseph W. Lowery  
Wiley Publishing, Inc.  
ISBN 0764543504

### **Dreamweaver MX 2004 Help System** (Using Dreamweaver)

### **HTML for the World Wide Web (with XHTML and CSS), 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, Visual Quickstart Guide**

Elizabeth Castro  
Peachpit Press, 1249 Eight Street, Berkeley, CA 94710  
ISBN: 0321130073

### **Macromedia Dreamweaver MX 2004 Hands-On Training**

Garo Green  
Peachpit Press, 1249 Eight Street, Berkeley, CA 94710  
ISBN: 032120297X