

# XHTML and CSS: Intermediate Topics

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The following is a list of intermediate-level topics centering around using XHTML (extensible hypertext markup language) and CSS (cascading style sheets) in Web Standards-based website and page design. Along with each topic is a list of online resources that you should refer to for further tutorials, references and information.

A general good reference collection to follow would be my personal current collection of HTML tutorials found via my del.icio.us collection - <http://del.icio.us/BTal/html+tutorial>

## Referencing CSS Stylesheets

Here are the few ways to reference and associate CSS with your (X)HTML Markup. **Please note** that inline CSS will trump In-the-Document CSS which will trump CSS referenced from an external CSS file.

### Inline CSS Definitions

Adding CSS rules as an attribute of an (X)HTML element/tag. Any many rules as desired can be written but all must be contained in one "style" attribute. An example would be:

```
<div style="background-color:#ff3; border:1px solid black; color:red; font-size:150%; padding:1em;">I am a styled div!</div>
```

### In-the-Document CSS Definitions

In-the-Document CSS is written in the <head> portion of the (X)HTML page and is always contained within <style></style> tags. Only having to write the styles once within a document is a huge benefit over writing them inline. An example would be:

```
<head>
  <style type="text/css">
    p {
      background-color:#339;
      color:#fff;
      padding:15px;
    }
  </style>
</head>
```

### Separating External CSS

The ideal way to define styles for your HTML elements is to put the definitions in a separate document. Then, any page that includes the CSS file will inherit the same styles.

HTML pages can include as many CSS files as you need, listed in the <head> portion of the document, and the styles will be combined together (according to inheritance & cascading rules). Some examples of how to reference external CSS files (always containing a file extension of .css) are:

```
<!-- a screen stylesheet reference -->
<style type="text/css">
    @import url("screen.css");
</style>

<!-- a print stylesheet reference -->
<link rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" media="print" href="print.css" />
```

**Please note:** the second method (<link...>) can be used to referenced screen-specific stylesheets too. The "@import" command is a newer way to reference external stylesheets that very old and not supported browsers (4.0 browsers and below) do not support. This can be an advantage as your layouts do not need to stand up to the minimal modern CSS support these uncommon browsers support- user instead receive their browsers default styling of the XHTML document.

## Classes and vs. IDs

What classes and id attributes are is explained in the introductory handout previously distributed. Where and when to use classes and id attributes in (X)HTML and reference these in CSS is something covered by the following resources:

### Resources

- ▶ <http://www.tizag.com/cssT/cssid.php>
- ▶ [http://www.w3schools.com/css/css\\_syntax.asp](http://www.w3schools.com/css/css_syntax.asp)

## (X)HTML Element Display

(X)HTML elements can be displayed either in block or inline style. The difference between these is one of the most basic things you need to know in order to use CSS effectively. The 3 ways that (X)HTML elements can be displayed. All (X)HTML elements are naturally displayed in one of the following ways:

- ▶ **Block:** Takes up the full width available, with a new line before and after (display:block;)
- ▶ **Inline:** Takes up only as much width as it needs, and does not force new lines (display:inline;)
- ▶ **Not displayed:** Some tags, like <meta /> and <style> are not visible (display:none;)

### Further Resources

- ▶ CSS: Block and Inline Elements – <http://www.webdesignfromscratch.com/css-block-and-inline.cfm>

## Using CSS to Lay Out Sections

CSS can be used to place block-level elements in particular order. Understanding how the document flow of your (X)HTML document is being/can be styled by CSS is essential to laying out elements on a web page using (X)HTML and CSS. You need to understand and review the following things:

### **Floating (X)HTML Elements using CSS**

- ▶ <http://css.maxdesign.com.au/floatutorial/>

### **Laying out CSS Columns and Sample Layouts**

- ▶ <http://www.glish.com/css/>
- ▶ [http://www.thenoodleincident.com/tutorials/box\\_lesson/boxes.html](http://www.thenoodleincident.com/tutorials/box_lesson/boxes.html)
- ▶ <http://www.bluerobot.com/web/layouts/>

## Creating Navigation Systems with CSS

You can use CSS to create navigation portions of your web layout. The following are some good tutorials and examples how to many both vertical and horizontal navigation systems:

- ▶ [http://www.456bereastreet.com/archive/200501/turning\\_a\\_list\\_into\\_a\\_navigation\\_bar/](http://www.456bereastreet.com/archive/200501/turning_a_list_into_a_navigation_bar/)
- ▶ <http://tutorials.alsacreation.com/modelesmenus/>

## Using Background Images and Background Patterns with CSS

- ▶ [http://www.w3schools.com/css/css\\_background.asp](http://www.w3schools.com/css/css_background.asp)
- ▶ <http://css.maxdesign.com.au/listamatic/vertical05.htm>
- ▶ <http://squidfingers.com/patterns/>

## Other Specific Questions

- ▶ How do I open up a link in a new browser window using (X)HTML? – <http://www.sitepoint.com/article/standards-compliant-world>
- ▶ How do I use graphics for my headers and banners? – Using a technique called “Image Replacement” See some examples below:  
<http://www.mezzoblue.com/tests/revise-image-replacement/>  
[http://www.digital-web.com/articles/in\\_defense\\_of\\_fahrner\\_image\\_replacement/](http://www.digital-web.com/articles/in_defense_of_fahrner_image_replacement/)  
[http://www.ryznardesign.com/web\\_coding/image\\_replacement/](http://www.ryznardesign.com/web_coding/image_replacement/)
- ▶ How do I center my layout on my page? – [http://www.webreference.com/authoring/style/sheets/css\\_mastery/](http://www.webreference.com/authoring/style/sheets/css_mastery/)