

# How to create and edit a CSS rule

You can quickly and easily create and edit a CSS rule in the CSS Designer panel. The *CSS Designer* panel is an integrated panel that lets you 'visually' create CSS rules, and set properties in either internal or external files.

In this guide, you review the components of CSS rules, then create and apply internal CSS rules using the CSS Designer panel.

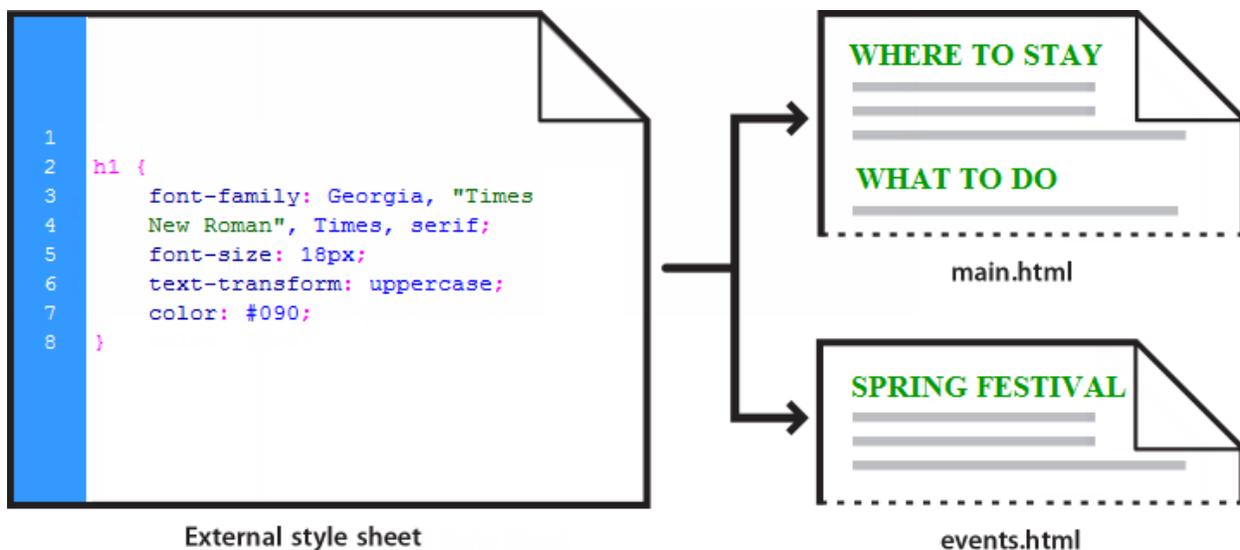
## About CSS rules

A CSS formatting rule consists of two parts: the selector and the declaration (or in most cases, a block of declarations). The *selector* is a term (such as `p`, `h1`, a class name, or an id) that identifies the formatted element. The *declaration* block defines the style properties. In the following example, `h1` (a heading tag) is the selector, and everything that falls between the braces (`{` and `}`) is the declaration block (defining the properties of the `h1` heading):

```
h1 {  
  font-family: Georgia, "Times New Roman", Times, serif;  
  font-size: 18px;  
  text-transform: uppercase;  
  color: #090;  
}
```

An individual declaration consists of two parts: the *property* (such as font family) and *value* (such as Georgia). In the previous CSS rule, a particular style has been created for `h1` tags; the text for all `h1` tags linked to this style will be 18 pixels in size, Georgia font, uppercase, and bright green (hex value #090).

The style (which comes from a rule, or a collection of rules) resides in a place separate from the actual text it's formatting—usually in an external style sheet or in the head section of an HTML document. Thus, one rule for `h1` tags can apply to many tags at once (and in the case of external style sheets, the rule can apply to many tags at once on many different pages) (**Figure 1**). In this way, CSS makes updates extremely easy. When you update a CSS rule in one place, the formatting of all the elements that use the defined style is automatically updated to the new style.



**Figure 1** Updating a CSS rule in one place updates all elements

There are three main types of CSS:

*Class style:* Similar to the styles you use in word processing and page layout programs. For example, you may want to format all body text in 10-point, Arial, dark green type. You can create a class style with these attributes and then apply this style to all body text in your website. Class names must begin with a period and can contain any combination of letters and numbers (for example, `myhead1`).

*HTML tag style:* Applies global formatting to individual HTML tags rather than to individual selections. Suppose you want to modify the Heading 1 paragraph style to appear always in purple text. Instead of creating a class style and applying it to every heading in the document, you can create an HTML tag style with these attributes and apply it to the Heading 1 `<h1>` tag. In effect, you are redefining the HTML tag.

*Advanced styles:* Redefine the formatting for a particular combination of elements, or for other selector forms as allowed by CSS (for example, the selector `td h2` applies whenever an h2 header appears inside a table cell.) Advanced styles can also redefine the formatting for tags that contain a specific id attribute (for example, the styles defined by `#myStyle` apply to all tags that contain the attribute-value pair `id="myStyle"`).

CSS rules can reside in the following locations:

*External CSS style sheets* are collections of CSS rules stored in a separate, external CSS (.css) file (not an HTML file). You link this file to one or more pages in a website with a link or an `@import` rule in the head section of a document.

*Internal (or embedded) CSS style sheets* are collections of CSS rules included in a `style` tag in the head section of an HTML document.

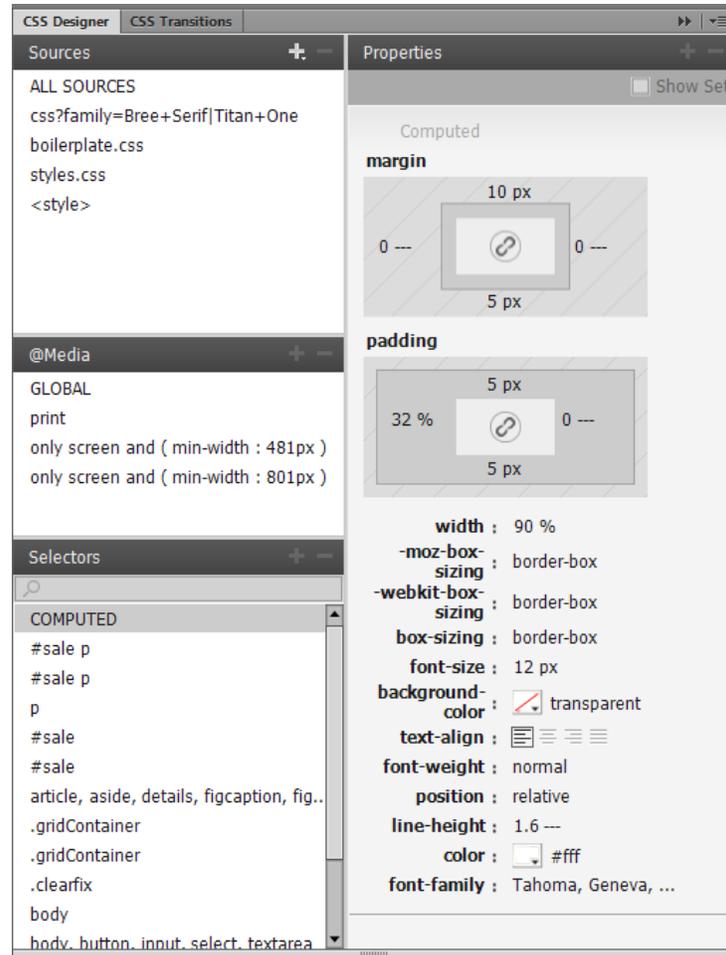
*Inline styles* places the CSS style attribute inside the relevant tag throughout an HTML document. (Inline styles can be created using the Properties Inspector, although is not recommended as this method mixes content with presentation. If used, do so sparingly.)

Dreamweaver recognizes styles defined in existing documents as long as they conform to CSS style guidelines. Dreamweaver also renders most applied styles directly in Design view. (Previewing the document in a browser window, however, gives you the most accurate “live” rendering of the page.) Some CSS styles are rendered differently in Microsoft Internet Explorer, Netscape, Opera, Apple Safari, or other browsers, and some are not currently supported by any browser.

By default, Dreamweaver uses Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) to format text. You can use the CSS Designer panel as the primary tool for creating and editing your CSS. The CSS Designer panel is an editing tool that helps you generate clean web-standard code that lets you 'visually' create CSS files, rules, and set properties, along with media queries.

## Using the CSS Designer panel

In the CSS Designer panel you can track the CSS rules and properties affecting a currently selected element. CSS Designer is context-sensitive. This means, for any given context or selected page element, you can view the associated selectors and properties. Further, when you select a selector in CSS Designer, the associated source and media queries are highlighted in the respective panes.



**Figure 2** CSS Designer panel

The CSS Designer panel consists of the following panes (**Figure 2**):

- *Sources* Lists all the style sheets associated with the document. Using this pane, you can create and attach a CSS to the document, or define styles within the document.
- *@Media* Lists all the media queries in the source selected in the Sources pane. If you do not select a specific CSS, this pane displays all the media queries associated with the document.
- *Selectors* Lists all the selectors in the source selected in the Sources pane. If you also select a media query, this pane narrows down the list of selectors for that media query. If no CSS or media queries are selected, this pane displays all the selectors in the document. When you select Global in the @Media pane, all the selectors that are not included in a media query of the selected source are displayed.
- *Properties* Displays properties that you can set for the specified selector.

## Create and attach style sheets

There are several ways to create and attach style sheets: by creating a new external CSS file; by using an existing external CSS file; or by defining CSS rules internally within your HTML document. You will use this last method, using internal CSS rules, to create styles sheets that are included in a `style` tag in the head section of an HTML document. For more information about how to create new, and use existing external CSS files, see the guide *How to work with external Cascading Style Sheets*.

In this section, you will create a new HTML page, add a heading and paragraph, and apply basic text styles. After you complete these steps, be sure to continue experimenting with the CSS Designer panel to visually edit the rules and set properties.

*How to define a CSS rule within a document:*

1. Start Dreamweaver.
2. Select File > New to create a new document.

The New Document dialog box appears (**Figure 3**).

3. In the Blank Page category of the New Document dialog box, select HTML Page Type to create a plain HTML page.
4. In the Layout column, select None.
5. Click the Create button.

The new HTML page opens.

6. In the Document toolbar, click the Show Code And Design Views (Split) button (**Figure 4**).

Being able to view the code that Dreamweaver generates for creating styles will be useful to help you understand and write your own CSS syntax later on.

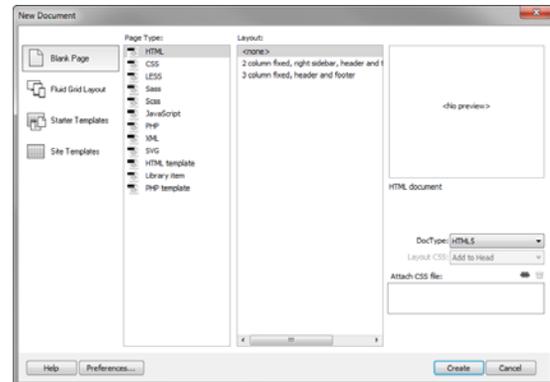
7. Place the cursor in document window in Design view, or between the <body> tags in Code view. This will be your page heading.
8. Select Window > Insert.

The Insert panel opens (**Figure 5**).

9. Choose Structure from the Category popup menu.
10. Click the arrow on the Heading button, then select the H1 option from the menu.

Heading 1 placeholder text is inserted into the document (**Figure 6**).

11. In either the Design or Code view, select the text and retype a title for your page.
12. Press Enter (Windows) or Return (Mac OS) to create a new paragraph and add additional text. This section will be paragraph text.
13. Type a larger section of text or paste text copied in another application in the Design view Document window.



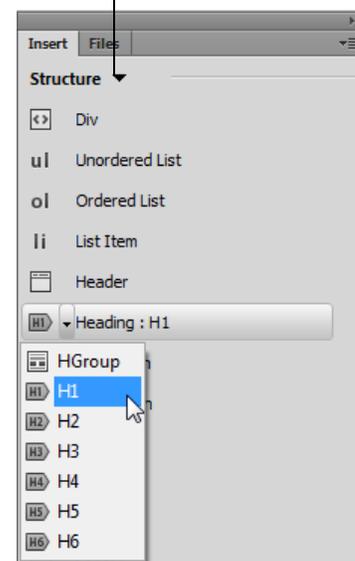
**Figure 3** New Document dialog box



Show Code And Design Views button

**Figure 4** Document window view options

Category popup menu



**Figure 5** Insert panel

```

6 </head>
7 <body>
8 <h1>This is the content for Layout H1 Tag</h1>
9 </body>
10 </html>

```

**Figure 6** H1 placeholder text

14. Choose Windows > CSS Designer.

The CSS Designer panel opens (Figure 7).

**Note:** By default, the Properties pane is visible at the bottom of the panel. To see more of the Properties pane, undock the CSS Designer panel, mouse over the left edge and drag to expand the CSS Designer (Figure 8).

15. In the Sources pane of the CSS Designer panel, click the plus symbol to add a CSS source and choose Define in Page (Figure 9).

The <style> tag is added to the head section of the HTML document. Any newly-defined CSS rules will be saved in this internal CSS style tag.

16. Select the heading text in the document window, in either the Design or Code view.

17. In the CSS Designer, choose the <style> source in the Sources pane (Figure 10) so that the internal CSS rules are selected.

18. In the Selectors pane, click the plus sign. Based on the element selected in the document, CSS Designer smartly identifies and prompts you with the relevant selector. In this case, the selector `body h1` is applied (Figure 11). By default, the selector is 'More Specific'. You can edit the selector to make it 'Less Specific'.

The Properties pane displays the grouped categories represented by different icons at the top of the Properties pane:

- Layout
- Text
- Border
- Background
- Others (list of 'text only' properties and not properties with visual controls)

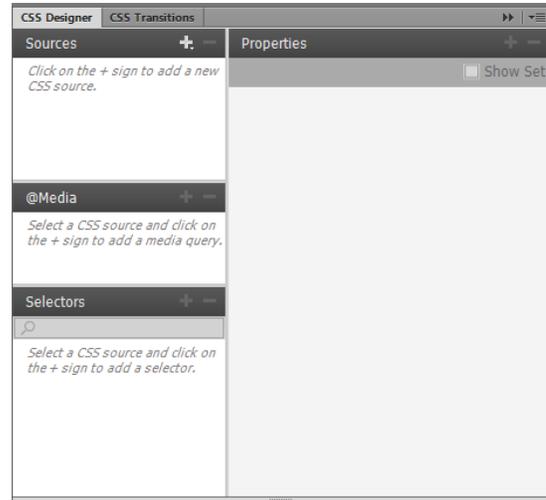


Figure 7 CSS Designer panel



Figure 8 Drag to expand CSS Designer panel

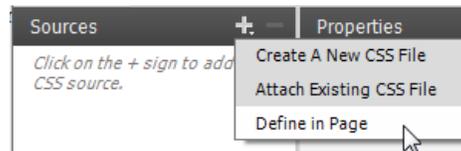


Figure 9 Select a CSS source

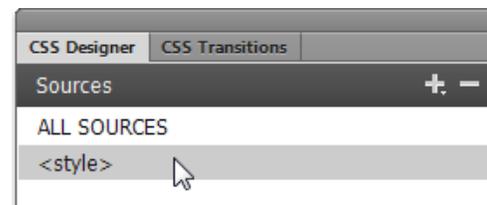


Figure 10 Choose the internal CSS rules



Figure 11 Identifying a selector

19. In the Properties pane, click the Text icon (**Figure 12**).
20. In the Properties > Text pane, click font-family to open the list of available fonts.

A menu of available font opens (**Figure 13**).

21. Select a serif font family such as 'Constantia, Lucida Bright, DejaVu Serif, Georgia, serif.'

**Note:** It is a good practice to assign a font combination instead of a single font. This ensures that most page visitors will view page text the same way. A browser uses the first font in the combination that is installed in the visitor's system. If none of the fonts in the combination is installed, the browser displays the text as specified by the visitor's browser preferences.

22. Select Uppercase using the text-transform option.

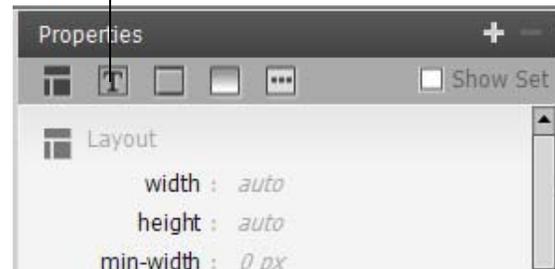
23. Select a color for the text using the color picker (**Figure 14**).

The font and color options are applied to the selected text (**Figure 15**).

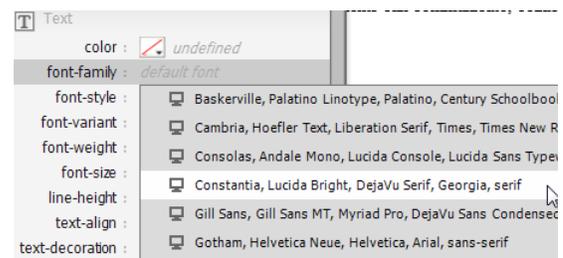
24. Use the CSS Designer panel to set the font, color, and size properties for the paragraph text. For example, you might choose a sans-serif font, green, and font-size set to 14px.

Observe in Code view that Dreamweaver updates the styles created with the CSS Designer panel directly in the head section of the document.

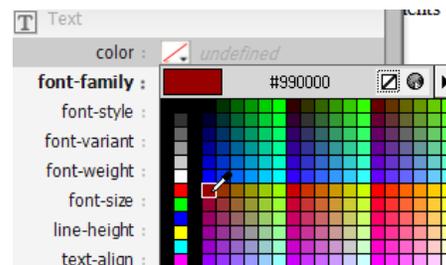
Text properties



**Figure 12** Properties pane



**Figure 13** Font-family menu



**Figure 14** Text color picker

```

6 <style type="text/css">
7   body h1 {
8     font-family: Constantia, "Lucida Bright
9     "DejaVu Serif", Georgia, serif;
10    text-transform: uppercase;
11    color: #990000;
  }

```

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**Figure 15** H1 CSS in Code and Design view