QuickSheet: CSS Key Concepts

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FLOW
Normal flow rules

- The browser presents content in the order it appears in your HTML.
- BLOCK elements are stacked vertically.
- INLINE elements are laid out side-by-side within the confines of the viewport, or their containing block.
- The top and bottom margins of block elements 'collapse' by default.

CSS Float

- Floated elements are removed from normal flow, but still interact with flowed content.
- Floating allows blocks to be positioned side-by-side.
- Use the 'clear' property to ensure content in normal flow is laid out under floated blocks.

CSS Positioning

- Positioned elements are removed entirely from normal flow, and can overlap flowed content.
- Absolute positioning is by reference to the closest containing positioned block (or BODY element if none exists).

TIP: To force a block to expand vertically to contain a floated child element, float the parent block also.

SELECTORS

Select elements:	HTML:	\<elem\>
	CSS:	elem {rule}
	Example:	p {color:blue; font-size:110%;}
Select classes:	HTML:	\<elem class = "myclass"\>
	CSS:	.myclass {rule}
	Example:	.shouting {text-transform:uppercase;}
Select IDs:	HTML:	\<elem id= "thisID"\>
	CSS:	#thisID {rule}
	Example:	#header {height:100px;}
Elements & classes:	HTML:	\<elem class = "myclass"\>
	CSS:	elem.myclass {rule}
	Example:	p.shouting {text-transform:uppercase;}
Elements & IDs:	HTML:	\<elem id= "thisID"\>
	CSS:	elem#thisID {rule}
	Example:	div#header {height:100px;}
Nested elements:	HTML:	\<outer\>\<inner\>...\</inner\>\</outer\>
	CSS:	outer inner {rule}
	Example:	div#header p {font-size:180%;}

Pseudo classes: Pseudo classes apply to ELEMENTS. Most often used with the \<a\> link anchor:

  a {general rule for \<a\> element}
  a:hover {rule for mouse-over}
  a:visited {rule for visited links}

SPECIFICITY

Sometimes, many CSS rules could apply to a particular element. To know which rules apply, count up as follows:

Nbr. IDs ; Nbr. Classes ; Nbr Elements

Examples:

p	0 ; 0 ; 1
#header p	1 ; 0 ; 1
.citation	0 ; 1 ; 0
span.citation	0 ; 1 ; 1

Rank by each value in turn; highest overall ranking 'wins'. If two selectors rank equally, the last declared will win.

Tip: Selectors override rule-by-rule, not as a whole set of rules, so in this example:

p {color:blue; font-weight:normal;}	0 ; 0 ; 1
p.alert {font-weight:bold;}	0 ; 1 ; 1

The content of \<p class= "alert"\> will be bold because the p.alert rule is more specific, but will also be blue because the less specific selector's color rule has not been overridden.

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NOTE: Inline styles

Inline styles (e.g. \<p style = "color:black;"\>My black text\</p\>) always override other stylesheet rules.

Link an external stylesheet:

Link from HTML**:**   \<link href="styles.css" media="screen" rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" /\>

Import into Styles: @import "mystyle.css";   or   @import url("mystyle.css");

Useful Resources:

W3C Schools:	http://www.w3schools.com/CSS/
Sitepoint:	http://reference.sitepoint.com/css
Firebug:	http://www.getfirebug.com
Safari for PC	http://www.apple.com/safari

Tip: Develop for Firefox first

Implementation of CSS can vary between browsers, with IE6 causing most headaches. We recommend the following strategy to minimize the pain of x-browser CSS development:

- Use Firefox as your first target browser. It has good support of standards, and is the most used non-Microsoft browser.
- Download and use the Firebug plug-in for Firefox (www.getfirebug.com) to view and tweak your styles.
- Target alternate rules for older versions of IE by using Microsoft Conditional Comments to include additional stylesheets
- Check your pages as you go along for layout in all the main browsers - don't leave it to the end!