

# CSS BASICS

Watch RonTube CSS videos for more detailed information.

**CSS is an acronym for Cascading Style Sheet.** CSS's job is to implement style and define structure in an HTML page. CSS rules can be contained within a *style* element in the *head* of the code, or be a linked external file. *Cascading* refers to elements inheriting styles (aka rules) from the element(s) that they are contained within.

For example, in the code to the right, note:

- ❶ The *rules* attached to the *body* element define the background color, font family and text color. Since all other elements will be contained within the body they will inherit these rules unless specified otherwise.
- ❷ A font size has been specified for all content in the page which has a `<p>` tag. Size was not specified in the body rules, so this is a new rule.
- ❸ The rules for content with an `<h1>` tag have changed the font family to Arial and the font color to black (`#000`). These rules have overridden the rules established in the body.
- ❹ The rules for `<h2>` elements did not change the font color so it *inherited* the white type color established in body. But the rules did change the font family and the background color.

```

1 <!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0
  Transitional//EN"
  "http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">
2 <html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml">
3
4 <head>
5 <meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html;
  charset=UTF-8" />
6 <title>Untitled Document</title>
7
8 <style type="text/css">
9
10 body { ❶
11   background-color: #C00;
12   font-family: Georgia, "Times New Roman", Times, serif;
13   color: #FFF;
14 }
15
16 p { ❷
17   font-size: 14px;
18 }
19
20 h1 { ❸
21   color: #000;
22   font-family: Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
23 }
24
25 h2 { ❹
26   background-color: #900;
27   font-family: Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
28 }
29
30 </style>
31
32 </head>
33
34 <body>
35 <p>this is a paragraph
36 </p>
37 <h1>this is a headline</h1>
38 <h2>this is a headline 2</h2>
39 </body>
40 </html>
41

```

this is a paragraph ❷

this is a headline ❸

this is a headline 2 ❹



**SELECTORS** indicate to which element(s) a style applies. *Declarations* state how the element should be styled. Declarations have two parts: A *property* and a *value*.

There are various kinds of selectors, these are the most common:

**Tag Selector** Selectors used to apply style to native html element tags (such as `body`, `p`, `h1`, `div`) in a document.

**Class Selector** Applies rules to element(s) whose *class* attribute matches the one specified (e.g., `.highlight`). You may apply a class multiple times. This selector type is often used to apply rules *inline* with a span element:

`<p>this is <span class="highlight">important</span></p>`

**ID Selector** Applies rules to an element whose *id* attribute matches the one specified (e.g., `#sidebar`). Unlike other selectors, *an ID Selector can be applied only once*. This selector type is often applied to `div` elements that are primary containers. `<div id="sidebar">Content</div>`

A **PRIMARY BENEFIT OF CSS** is that you can write a rule once and have it applied many many times throughout a document or web site. When you change a rule, then that change will automatically cascade throughout the document(s).

A **STYLE SHEET** may be internal (within the head of the code of a single html page) or external (it's a separate .css file). The benefit of an external style sheet is that the styles can be applied to multiple pages, or even an entire site.

To import an external style sheet, create a link element in the head of the code:

`<link href="css/content.css" type="text/css" rel="stylesheet" />`  
(You can also import style sheets from within Dreamweaver.)

