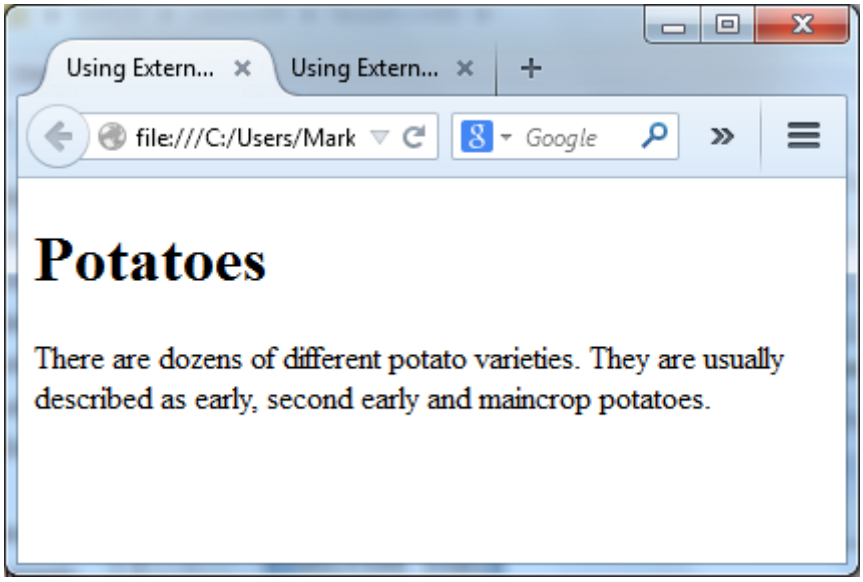
Cascading Style Sheets

CSS Introduction

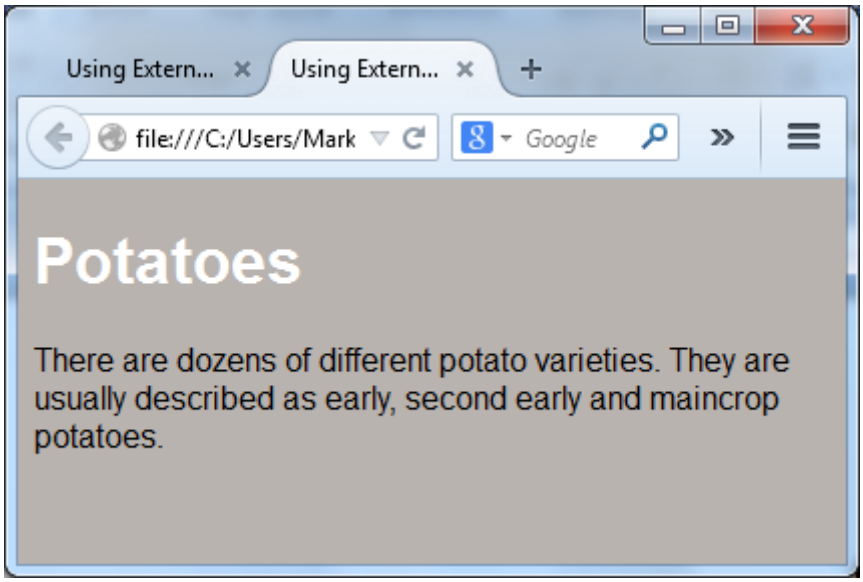
CSS allows you to create rules that specify how the content of an element should appear. For example, you can specify that the background of the page is yellow, all paragraphs should appear in blue using the Arial typeface, or that all level one headings should be in red, italic, Times typeface.

Example

Below is a screen shot without any CSS applied:



Now the same page with 3 CSS rules applied:



How to Use CSS

There a three ways to use CSS with a web page:

1. External Style sheets (the best method – used for sites of two or more web pages).
2. Internal Style sheets (used when a site consists of one page only).
3. Inline style sheets (try to avoid! The CSS is embedded within the HTML).

CSS Rules

CSS works by associating rules with HTML elements. These rules govern how the content of specified elements should be displayed. A CSS rule contains two parts: a selector and a declaration:

```
p {
     font-family: arial;
}
```

In the example CSS rule above, the red **p** is the **selector**. In this case it is saying apply the rule to every HTML **<p>** element. The green text in the example is the **declaration**, in the example it is stating that every piece of text inside a **<p>** element should be displayed as Arial font.

CSS rules can contain more than one declaration – note the American spelling of words:

```
p {
     font-family:  arial;
     color:        red;
     text-align:   center
}
```

It is also possible to style more than one element at once:

```
h1, h2, h3 {
     font-family:  arial, 'sans-serif';
     font-weight:  bold;
}
```

Points to remember

- There are three ways to apply CSS:
    - External Style Sheet
    - Internal Style Sheet
    - Inline style

- External style sheet are the preferred method as you only have to make one style sheet regardless of how many pages are in a web site.
- CSS selectors are used to choose which HTML elements to style.
- CSS declarations state how to style a particular element.