

Class and ID Attributes

[Text saying "Class and ID Attributes" is shown on a blank background.]

Female: Class and ID attributes. To target an element in CSS as a selector, we've been referring to them by their element name.

[The text on the screen changes. CSS targeting the element names is shown. The paragraph element is having its color changed to #000. The background color of all h1 elements are being changed to yellow.]

But there are two attributes for elements that can identify them with a different name. Because we might have a whole lot of p tags on our page. But maybe we only want to apply some CSS to only one or some of them. That's when classes and ID attributes come in handy. They can be used in HTML elements and also targeted as a selector in CSS. The developer can choose the name or value of IDs and classes, but they shouldn't start with the number. These ID and class attributes are placed inside the beginning tag of the element.

[The text changes to just a paragraph element. The beginning tag says "<p class='anyname'>".]

Then later when CSS is used, the ID and class values can be used to target just that element.

[The text changes to CSS. The selector for the CSS is ".anyname".]

IDs and classes don't affect the presentation of an element unless there's a CSS rule, selecting that class or ID that indicates it should be displayed differently. If I had four paragraphs and I only wanted every other paragraph to have a light gray background, how do I target just some of the paragraphs in CSS and not others?

[A website is shown. The title is "Ways to Stay Warm Outdoors". Four paragraphs are shown giving tips on how to stay warm outdoors.]

If I target the p element, they'd all be shaded.

[CSS is shown changing all p tags background color to #ccc. The background color of all four paragraphs in the website are now gray.]

I could give the paragraphs that I want shading to a class name of shaded.

[An image of the website's HTML appears and the other two images are removed. The text "class='shaded'" is highlighted and is in the opening tag of both the first and third paragraph tags.]

And in CSS, I target not the p tag, but the class name of shaded. To show that it's a class, we put a dot or a period in front of it.

[An image of the CSS is shown. The text ".shaded { background-color: #ccc; }" is shown.]

This tells CSS to look for a class name. Now I can put a background color and it will apply to only the paragraphs with that className.

[The HTML and CSS images are removed and the website image is shown again. This time the first and third paragraphs are highlighted gray.]

IDs work similarly, but an ID attribute is used to uniquely identify the element from others on the page.

[The image of the website is removed. Text appears saying "<h1 id='main-topic'> My Title Here </h1>" is shown.]

This means I can't apply one ID name to multiple elements like I did the class shaded.

[New text underneath appears saying "<h2 id='main-topic'> My Sub Title Here </h2>". The text "id='main-topic'" is crossed out.]

If I give my H1 an ID of "myheader", I can't use the ID with that value my header anywhere else in this HTML document.

[The text is removed. An image of the HTML of the website is shown. The text "id='myheader'" is in the opening tag of the <h1> element and is highlighted.]

If I do, my code will not validate. To apply CSS to that ID, I could use the ID name with a hashtag in front of it.

[The image of the HTML is removed. An image containing CSS is shown. The selector of an element is "#myheader".]

This tells CSS that you're looking for an ID called my header. So dots are for classes and hashtags are for IDs. You could also use a class name that is used only once on the page as well. And CSS can be applied to only that one class with the same results.

[The image containing CSS is removed. The image of the websites HTML is shown again. This time the word "class" has replaced "id" in the opening tag of the <h1> element.]

So there's always some confusion as to why we need IDs. If you go on to learn JavaScript later, for example, ID attributes can be used to allow the script to work with that one particular element and no other. So there are reasons that you might use IDs that will make more sense to you later. Elements can also have more than one class. For example, if I wanted to emphasize this text to be more bold and red, I can apply a class of emphasized to it.

[The image of the HTML is changed. The <h1> tag has an id instead of a class. The second paragraph has the tag surrounding the first sentence. The opening span tag has a class called "emphasize" in it. CSS is shown on the right selecting the "emphasize" class. The CSS changes the text to be bold and the color is changed to "darkred". An image of the website is shown. The first sentence of the second paragraph is bold and darkred.]

If I also want another paragraph emphasized, I could give it two class names. So now it has the shaded class name and the emphasise class name.

[The image of the website is removed. The image of the HTML is shown. The first paragraph's opening tag now says "<p class='shaded emphasize'>". The text "class='shaded emphasize'" is highlighted.]

In CSS, I have two different rules for each of those class names.

[The image of the website is shown. The first paragraph is bold and red with a gray background. The second paragraph's first sentence is bold and red. The third paragraph's background is gray.]

You could even have an ID and a class in one attribute. I can add the emphasized class to my H1 element that already has an ID.

[The image of the website is changed. The title is now bold and red.]

As your website grows larger with more and more HTML pages, it's nice to have just one CSS file so you don't have to reuse the same CSS for parts of the page that remain the same. But simple element name selectors can affect multiple pages in unexpected ways sometimes. So using meaningful classes and IDs can help organize your CSS for multiple pages as well.

[End of video]