Gradients are background Images!

Let's discuss the widely misunderstood concept of gradients in CSS as background images. Ready? Go!

For the first few years I wrote CSS, I couldn't wrap my head around how gradients really worked.

Also, why on earth does the property name say, `background-image` ?

I had no idea.

Well, now I'll save you the stress. Allow me explain it to you.

Gradients in CSS are images!

Like any other image type used with the `backgroud-image` property, gradients are just images! Think `.png` , `.jpeg` etc.

Allow that sink in for a bit.

While this may not interest you in any way, let me show you one darn good use of this.

Multiple Backgrounds with Gradients

One of the benefits of gradients being background images is the ability to mix them with other image formats in a multiple background-image declaration.

Take a look at this:

```
.bg {
  background: linear-gradient(rgba(192,57,43 ,0.8), rgba(44,62,80 ,0.8)),
                     url("http://i.imgur.com/tBhfy0L.jpg") 0% 0%/cover
no-repeat
}
```

What do you make of it?

The declaration above will apply both backgrounds to the element. As such you have an image behind a gradient blend!

```
.bg {
   background: linear-gradient(rgba(192,57,43 ,0.8), rgba(44,62,80 ,0.8)),
               url("http://i.imgur.com/tBhfy0L.jpg") 0% 0%/cover no-repeat
}
```
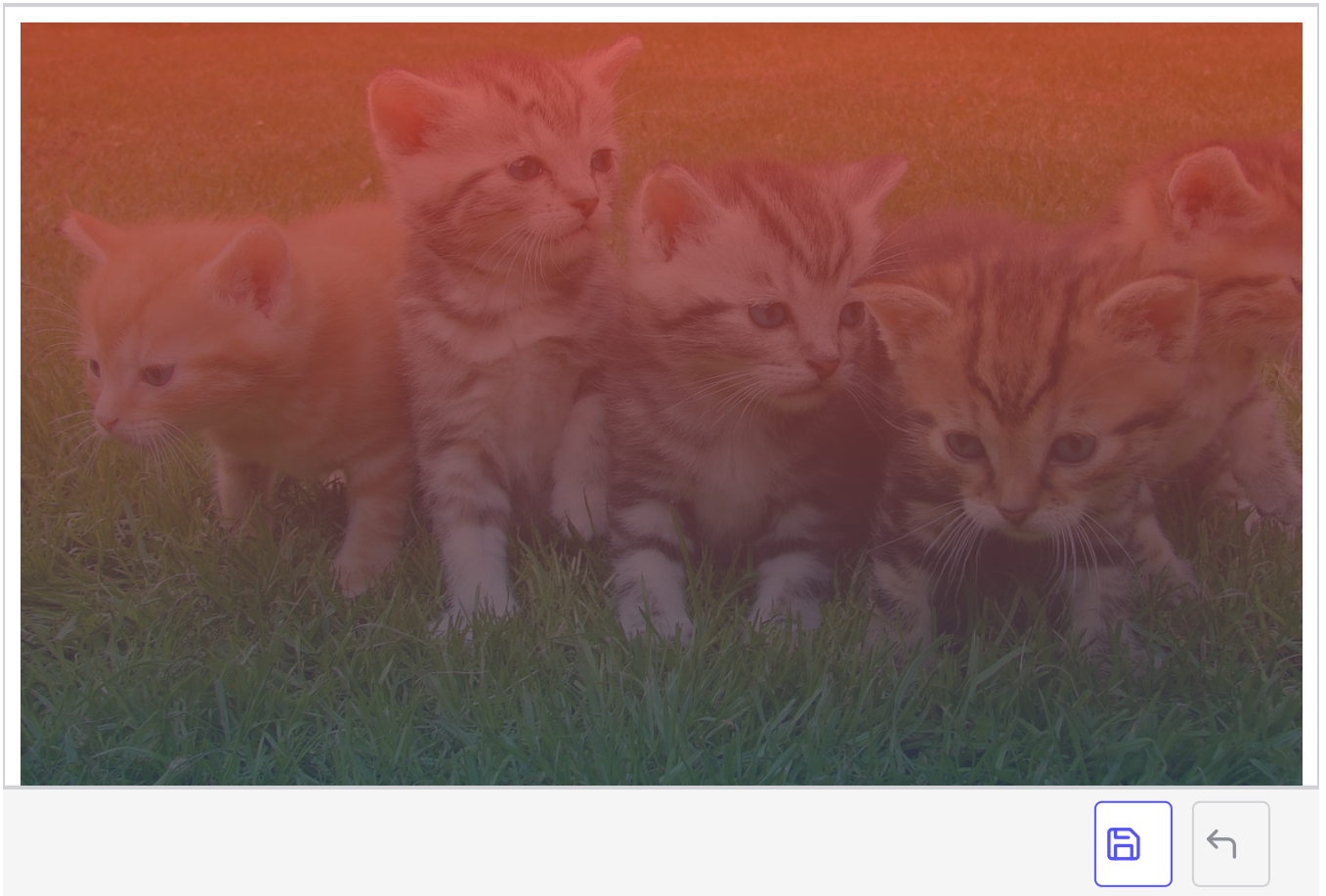
🟩 a gradient made up of transparent colors

🟥 a background image that 'covers' without being repeated

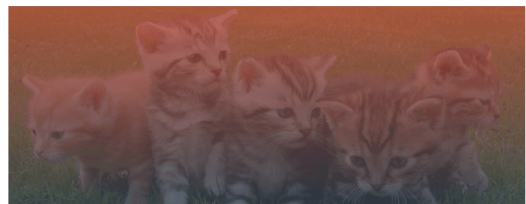Here's the output:

Output
HTML
CSS (SCSS)

Feel free to toy with the values.

This is a very important trick. It comes very handy when creating subtle, neat backgrounds.

The graphic below shows the states - before and after applying the gradient blend.
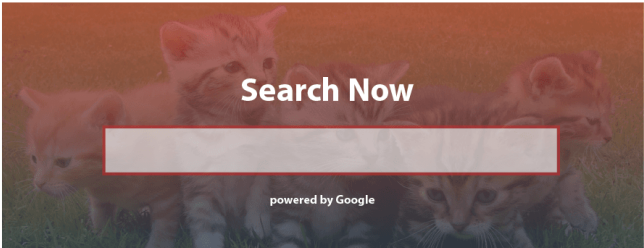

Before

After

What's the Application of this?

It is always more readable to have bright text on a darker background. Sometimes, all you need is a blended gradient.

See below:

Before

After

How it Works

The `background` shorthand allows for multiple background declarations.

The first declaration in the code above is that of a linear gradient. Note that the gradient is transparent as it is made up of at least one transparent color.

The first background image in the declaration sits on top of the other. Thus, the gradient sits on top of the other background image.

Also, since the gradient is transparent, this results in a gradient overlay i.e you see the second background image through the transparent gradient.