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How to fix a Div to top of page with CSS only

I am writing a glossary page. I have the alphabet links on the top of the page. I want to keep the top of the page (including the alphabet links) fixed, whilst the section of the page with the definitions, scrolls up/down as an alphabet is clicked.

My HTML looks a bit like this:

```
<html>
<head><title>My Glossary</title></head>
<body>
  <div id="top">
    <a href="#A">A</a> |
    <a href="#B">B</a> |
    <a href="#Z">Z</a>
  </div>

  <div id="term-defs">
    <dl>
      <span id="A"></span>
      <dt>foo</dt>
      <dd>This is the sound made by a fool</dd>
      <!-- and so on ... -->
    </dl>
  </div>
</body>
</html>
```

[Edit]

The kind of effect I am trying to create is similar to the one [here](#). The difference being that in the example in the link, the page scrolling is done when a user clicks on a category. In my case, I want to scroll the page when an index (i.e. an alphabet) at the top of the page, is clicked.

[html](#) [css](#)

edited Aug 11 '15 at 20:58

[Tiny Giant](#)

11.9k 6 30 52

asked Jul 22 '11 at 6:40

[oompahloompah](#)

3,103 14 48 78

-
- 7 +1 for not assuming that Javascript is the answer to everything. – [Mike](#) Jul 22 '11 at 6:46
-
- 22 I know the answer: it is "frames". Oops, wrong decade. – [bdares](#) Jul 22 '11 at 6:47
-
- 1 Nice question. It would be good if you edited the title, so other people who want to do this can find the question. – [Marcin](#) Jul 22 '11 at 6:49
-

4 Answers

Yes, there are a number of ways that you can do this. The "fastest" way would be to add CSS to the div similar to the following

```
#term-defs {
  height: 300px;
  overflow: scroll; }
```

This will force the div to be scrollable, but this might not get the best effect. Another route would be to absolute fix the position of the items at the top, you can play with this by doing something like this.

```
#top {
  position: fixed;
  top: 0;
  left: 0;
  z-index: 999;
  width: 100%;
  height: 23px;
}
```

This will fix it to the top, on top of other content with a height of 23px.

The final implementation will depend on what effect you really want.

answered Jul 22 '11 at 6:42

[Mitchel Sellers](#)

48.7k 10 88 155

-
- 7 just clarifying in case the OP doesn't know, `z-index` is the magic here. It lifts the div "above" the other items on the page and let's them scroll under and "past" it. – [Drew](#) Jul 22 '11 at 7:12
-

@mitchel: thanks for your help. I tried it, but the effect was not quite what I was looking for. I have edited my question to perhaps explain more clearly, the sort of effect I am trying to achieve - hopefully in a CSS only solution (maybe its not possible?) – [oompahloompah](#) Jul 22 '11 at 7:47

@oompahloompah: The best way to achieve the behavior you desire is to use 'Mitchel Sellers' answer and implement the topbar like `<link rel="import" href="/path/to/topbar.html">`. Another approach would be to add a 'placeholder' div on each site, which should have the same 'height' attribute as the `#top`

element. Both variations need a slightly adaption to your html code, therefore a wouldn't know about a pure css solution. – [Johannes Griebenow](#) Sep 25 at 10:37

You can do something like this:

```
<html>
<head><title>My Glossary</title></head>
<body style="margin:0px;">
  <div id="top" style="position:fixed;background:white;width:100%;">
    <a href="#A">A</a> |
    <a href="#B">B</a> |
    <a href="#Z">Z</a>
  </div>

  <div id="term-defs" style="padding-top:1em;">
    <dl>
      <span id="A"></span>
      <dt>foo</dt>
      <dd>This is the sound made by a fool</dd>
      <!-- and so on ... ->
    </dl>
  </div>
</body>
</html>
```

It's the **position:fixed** that's most important, because it takes the top div from the normal page flow and fixes it at it's pre-determined position. It's also important to use the **padding-top:1em** because otherwise the term-defs div would start right under the top div. The **background** and **width** are there to cover the contents of the term-defs div as they scroll under the top div.

Hope this helps.

answered Jul 22 '11 at 6:53



[fsaftoiu](#)

376 1 5

How do you decide if padding-top would be 1em or more? – [TechMaze](#) May 14 '15 at 18:38

It's actually the height of the item(s) you want fixed at the top. In this case it was 1em because the fixed <div> is one line of text. – [fsaftoiu](#) May 15 '15 at 19:03

You can simply make the top div fixed:

```
#top { position: fixed; top: 20px; left: 20px; }
```

answered Jul 22 '11 at 6:43

[Sascha Goebel](#)

305 1 2



You can also use **flexbox**, but you'd have to add a parent div that covers `div#top` and `div#term-defs`. So the **HTML** looks like this:

```
<body>
  <div id="content">
    <div id="top">
      <a href="#A">A</a> |
      <a href="#B">B</a> |
      <a href="#Z">Z</a>
    </div>

    <div id="term-defs">
      <dl>
        <span id="A"></span>
        <dt>foo</dt>
        <dd>This is the sound made by a fool</dd>
        <!-- and so on ... -->
      </dl>
    </div>
  </div>
</body>
```

The **CSS** would be that:

```
#content {
  width: 100%;
  height: 100%;
  display: flex;
  flex-direction: column;
}

#term-defs {
  flex-grow: 1;
  overflow: auto;
}
```

`flex-grow` ensures that the div's size is equal to the remaining size.

You could do the same without flexbox, but it would be more complicated to work out the height of `#term-defs` (you'd have to know the height of `#top` and use `calc(100% - 999px)` or set the height of `#term-defs` directly).

With flexbox dynamic sizes of the divs are possible.

One difference is that the scrollbar only appears on the `term-defs` div.

edited Feb 26 '16 at 9:16

answered Feb 26 '16 at 9:08



Domysee

8,120 8 30 59

protected by Paul Vargas Mar 29 '15 at 21:50

Thank you for your interest in this question. Because it has attracted low-quality or spam answers that had to be removed, posting an answer now requires 10 [reputation](#) on this site (the [association bonus](#) does not count).

10/13/2017

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