



CSS Pseudo-elements

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What are Pseudo-Elements?

A CSS pseudo-element is used to style specified parts of an element.

For example, it can be used to:

- Style the first letter, or line, of an element
- Insert content before, or after, the content of an element

Syntax

The syntax of pseudo-elements:

```
selector::pseudo-element {  
  property: value;  
}
```

The ::first-line Pseudo-element

The `::first-line` pseudo-element is used to add a special style to the first line of a text.

The following example formats the first line of the text in all `<p>` elements:

Example

```
p::first-line {  
  color: #ff0000;  
  font-variant: small-caps;  
}
```

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Note: The `::first-line` pseudo-element can only be applied to block-level elements.

The following properties apply to the `::first-line` pseudo-element:

- font properties
- color properties
- background properties
- word-spacing
- letter-spacing
- text-decoration
- vertical-align
- text-transform
- line-height
- clear

Notice the double colon notation - `::first-line` versus `:first-line`

The double colon replaced the single-colon notation for pseudo-elements in CSS3. This was an attempt from W3C to distinguish between **pseudo-classes** and **pseudo-elements**.

The single-colon syntax was used for both pseudo-classes and pseudo-elements in CSS2 and CSS1.

For backward compatibility, the single-colon syntax is acceptable for CSS2 and CSS1 pseudo-elements.

The ::first-letter Pseudo-element

The `::first-letter` pseudo-element is used to add a special style to the first letter of a text.

The following example formats the first letter of the text in all `<p>` elements:

Example

```
p::first-letter {  
  color: #ff0000;  
  font-size: xx-large;  
}
```

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Note: The `::first-letter` pseudo-element can only be applied to block-level elements.

The following properties apply to the `::first-letter` pseudo- element:

- font properties
- color properties
- background properties
- margin properties
- padding properties
- border properties
- text-decoration

- vertical-align (only if "float" is "none")
- text-transform
- line-height
- float
- clear

Pseudo-elements and CSS Classes

Pseudo-elements can be combined with CSS classes:

Example

```
p.intro::first-letter {  
  color: #ff0000;  
  font-size: 200%;  
}
```

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The example above will display the first letter of paragraphs with class="intro", in red and in a larger size.

Multiple Pseudo-elements

Several pseudo-elements can also be combined.

In the following example, the first letter of a paragraph will be red, in an xx-large font size. The rest of the first line will be blue, and in small-caps. The rest of the paragraph will be the default font size and color:

Example

```
p::first-letter {  
  color: #ff0000;  
  font-size: xx-large;
```

```
}  
  
p::first-line {  
  color: #0000ff;  
  font-variant: small-caps;  
}
```

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CSS - The ::before Pseudo-element

The `::before` pseudo-element can be used to insert some content before the content of an element.

The following example inserts an image before the content of each `<h1>` element:

Example

```
h1::before {  
  content: url(smiley.gif);  
}
```

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CSS - The ::after Pseudo-element

The `::after` pseudo-element can be used to insert some content after the content of an element.

The following example inserts an image after the content of each `<h1>` element:

Example

```
h1::after {  
  content: url(smiley.gif);  
}
```

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CSS - The ::selection Pseudo-element

The `::selection` pseudo-element matches the portion of an element that is selected by a user.

The following CSS properties can be applied to `::selection`: `color`, `background`, `cursor`, and `outline`.

The following example makes the selected text red on a yellow background:

Example

```
::selection {  
  color: red;  
  background: yellow;  
}
```

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Test Yourself with Exercises!

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All CSS Pseudo Elements

Selector	Example	Example description
<u>::after</u>	p::after	Insert something after the content of each <p> element
<u>::before</u>	p::before	Insert something before the content of each <p> element
<u>::first-letter</u>	p::first-letter	Selects the first letter of each <p> element
<u>::first-line</u>	p::first-line	Selects the first line of each <p> element
<u>::selection</u>	p::selection	Selects the portion of an element that is selected by a user

All CSS Pseudo Classes

Selector	Example	Example description
<u>:active</u>	a:active	Selects the active link
<u>:checked</u>	input:checked	Selects every checked <input> element
<u>:disabled</u>	input:disabled	Selects every disabled <input> element
<u>:empty</u>	p:empty	Selects every <p> element that has no children
<u>:enabled</u>	input:enabled	Selects every enabled <input> element
<u>:first-child</u>	p:first-child	Selects every <p> elements that is the first child of its parent
<u>:first-of-type</u>	p:first-of-type	Selects every <p> element that is the first <p> element of its parent
<u>:focus</u>	input:focus	Selects the <input> element that has focus
<u>:hover</u>	a:hover	Selects links on mouse over
<u>:in-range</u>	input:in-range	Selects <input> elements with a value within a specified range

<u>:invalid</u>	input:invalid	Selects all <input> elements with an invalid value
<u>:lang(<i>language</i>)</u>	p:lang(it)	Selects every <p> element with a lang attribute value starting with "it"
<u>:last-child</u>	p:last-child	Selects every <p> elements that is the last child of its parent
<u>:last-of-type</u>	p:last-of-type	Selects every <p> element that is the last <p> element of its parent
<u>:link</u>	a:link	Selects all unvisited links
<u>:not(selector)</u>	:not(p)	Selects every element that is not a <p> element
<u>:nth-child(n)</u>	p:nth-child(2)	Selects every <p> element that is the second child of its parent
<u>:nth-last-child(n)</u>	p:nth-last-child(2)	Selects every <p> element that is the second child of its parent, counting from the last child
<u>:nth-last-of-type(n)</u>	p:nth-last-of-type(2)	Selects every <p> element that is the second <p> element of its parent, counting from the last child
<u>:nth-of-type(n)</u>	p:nth-of-type(2)	Selects every <p> element that is the second <p> element of its parent
<u>:only-of-type</u>	p:only-of-type	Selects every <p> element that is the only <p> element of its parent
<u>:only-child</u>	p:only-child	Selects every <p> element that is the only child of its parent
<u>:optional</u>	input:optional	Selects <input> elements with no "required" attribute
<u>:out-of-range</u>	input:out-of-range	Selects <input> elements with a value outside a specified range
<u>:read-only</u>	input:read-only	Selects <input> elements with a "readonly" attribute specified
<u>:read-write</u>	input:read-write	Selects <input> elements with no "readonly" attribute
<u>:required</u>	input:required	Selects <input> elements with a "required"

attribute specified		
<u>:root</u>	root	Selects the document's root element
<u>:target</u>	#news:target	Selects the current active #news element (clicked on a URL containing that anchor name)
<u>:valid</u>	input:valid	Selects all <input> elements with a valid value
<u>:visited</u>	a:visited	Selects all visited links

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