



Block and Inline

Foundations Course

Introduction

In the previous lesson, we discovered that different display types have unique box models, and we can modify the box calculation by changing the `box-sizing` property. CSS has two box types: `block` and `inline` boxes, which determine element behavior and interaction. The `display` property controls how HTML elements appear on the webpage. We will explore its various options further in this lesson.

Lesson overview

This section contains a general overview of topics that you will learn in this lesson.

- You'll learn about "Normal flow".
- You'll learn the difference between `block` and `inline` elements.
- You'll learn which elements default to `block` and which elements default to `inline`.
- You'll learn what divs and spans are.

Block vs inline

Most of the elements that you have learned about so far are block elements. In other words, their default style is `display: block`. By default, block elements will appear on the page stacked atop each other, each new element starting on a new line.

Inline elements, however, do not start on a new line. They appear in line with whatever elements they are placed beside. A clear example of an inline element is a link, or `<a>` tag. If you stick one of these in the middle of a paragraph of text, [the link will behave like a part of the paragraph](#). Additionally, padding and margin behave differently on inline elements. In general, you do not want to try to put extra padding or margin on inline elements.

The middle ground inline-block

Inline-block elements behave like inline elements, but with block-style padding and margin. `display: inline-block` is a useful tool to know about, but in practice, you'll probably end up reaching for flexbox more often if you're trying to line up a bunch of boxes. Flexbox will be covered in-depth in the next lesson.

Divs and spans

We can't talk about block and inline elements without discussing divs and spans. All the other HTML elements we have encountered so far give meaning to their content. For example, paragraph elements tell the browser to display the text it contains as a paragraph. Strong elements tell the browser which texts within are important and so on. Yet, divs and spans give no particular meaning to their content. They are just generic boxes that can contain anything.

Having elements like this available to us is a lot more useful than it may first appear. We will often need elements that serve no other purpose than to be "hook" elements. We can give an id or class to target them for styling with CSS. Another use case we will face regularly is grouping related elements under one parent element to correctly position them on the page. Divs and spans provide us with the ability to do this.

Div is a block-level element by default. It is commonly used as a container element to group other elements. Divs allow us to *divide* the page into different blocks and apply styling to those blocks.

Span is an inline-level element by default. It can be used to group text content and inline HTML elements for styling and should only be used when no other semantic HTML element is appropriate.

Now that we have a good understanding of block and inline elements, let's move on to the assignment.

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