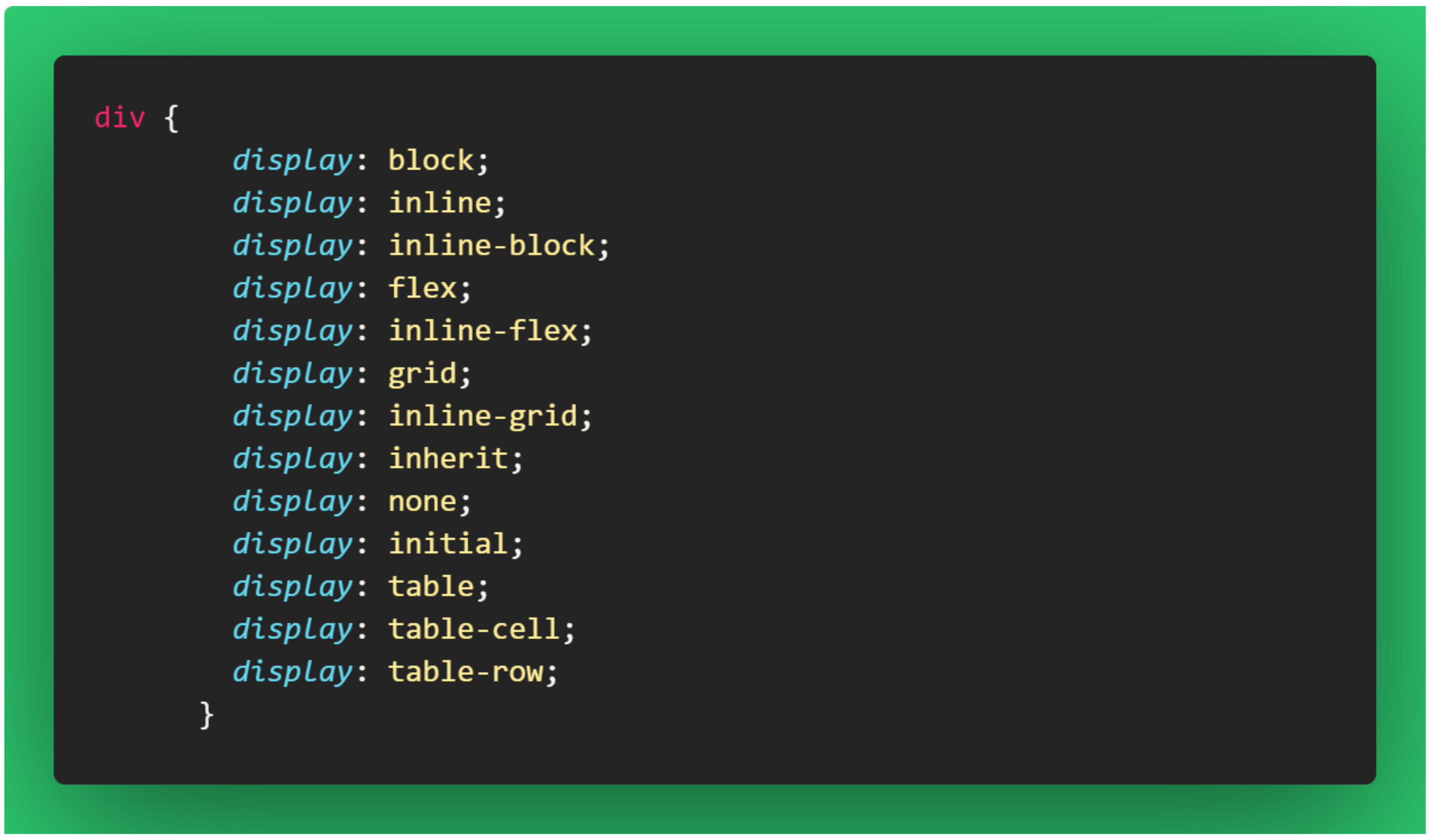
Display Property Values in CSS

elements don't take up an entire space – that is, they don't start on a new line – but block elements do.

The display property takes many different values such as `inline`, `inline-block`, `block`, `table`, and more, which all influence the layout and presentation of an element on the web page. Also, to implement the flex and grid layouts, you need to use the display property.

You can use this display property to change an `inline` element to `block`, `block` element to `inline`, `block` and `inline` elements to `inline-block`, and many more.



```
div {
        display: block;
        display: inline;
        display: inline-block;
        display: flex;
        display: inline-flex;
        display: grid;
        display: inline-grid;
        display: inherit;
        display: none;
        display: initial;
        display: table;
        display: table-cell;
        display: table-row;
      }
```

`display: inline`

An element with a display property set to `inline` will not start on a new line and it will take up the remaining/available screen width. It just takes up the space such an element would normally take.

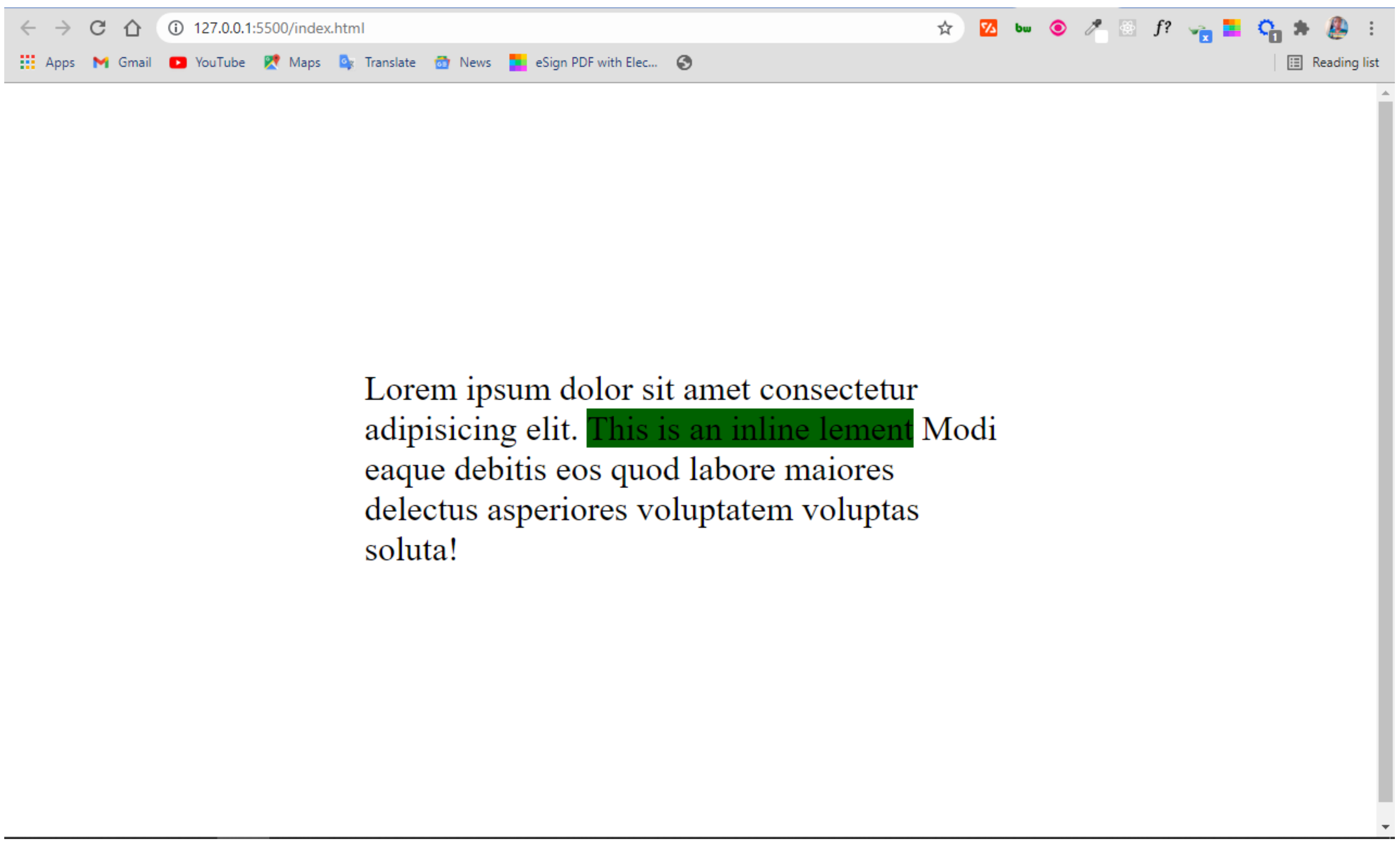
Because of this, you can't set the `width` and `height` of an element that has a display of `inline`, becuase it does not take up the whole screen width.

Some elements are inline by default, like `<span>`, `<a>`, `<i>`, and `<img>`.

```
<div>
      Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur adipisicing elit.
      <span>This is an inline lement</span> Modi eaque debitis eos quod labore
      maiores delectus asperiores voluptatem voluptas soluta!
</div>
```

```
  body {
        display: flex;
        align-items: center;
        justify-content: center;


      }
 div {
        max-width: 600px;
      }
 span {
        background-color: #006100;
      }
```



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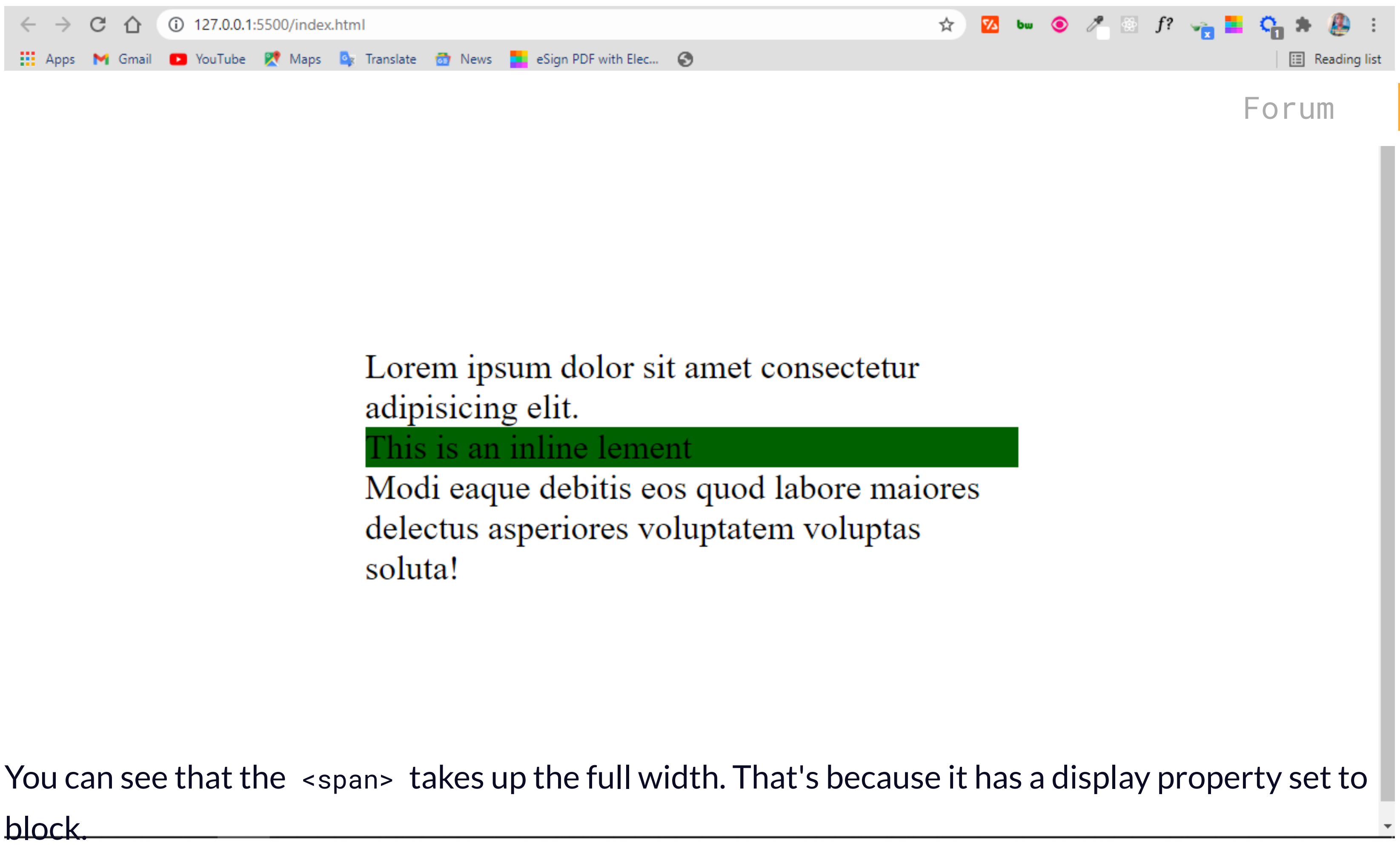
`display: block`

An element that has the display property set to `block` starts on a new line and takes up the available screen width.

You can specify the `width` and `height` properties for such elements. Examples of elements that are at block-level by default are `<div>`, `<section>`, `<p>`, and lots more.

You can set the `span` from the previous HTML code to `block` display and it will behave like a block-level element.

```
 span {
        display: block;
        background-color: #006100;
      }
```



Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur adipisicing elit.
This is an inline lement
Modi eaque debitis eos quod labore maiores delectus asperiores voluptatem voluptas soluta!

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You can see that the `<span>` takes up the full width. That's because it has a display property set to block.

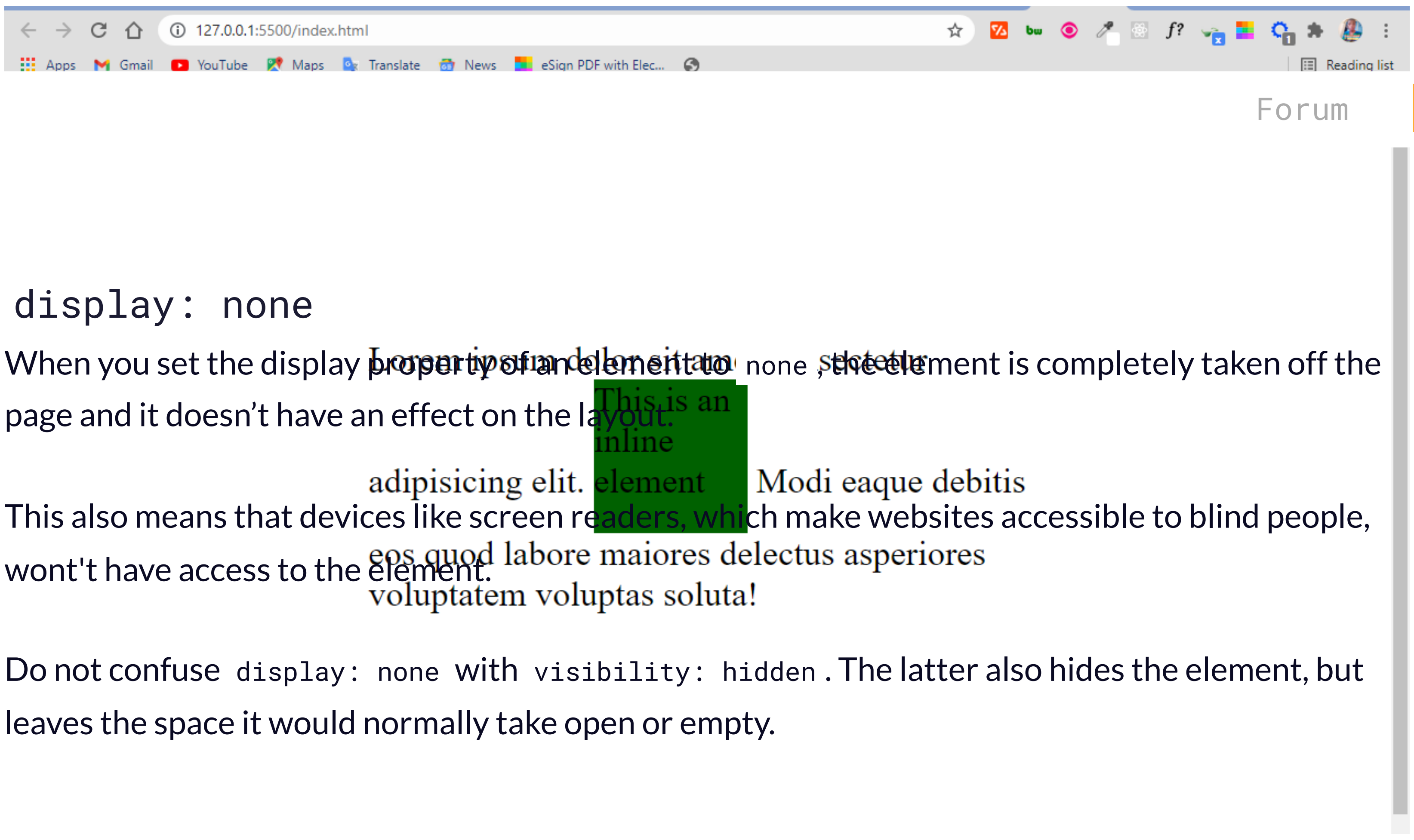
`display: inline-block`

Apart from block and inline display, there's also inline-block.

An element you assign a display of `inline-block` is inline by presentation. But it has the added advantage of you being able to apply `width` and `height` to it, which you can't do when the element is assigned a dispaly of `inline` .

So, you can look at the `inline-block` display as an inline element and block element in one package.

```
span {
       display: inline-block;
       background-color: #006100;
       width: 140px;
       height: 140px;
     }
```



Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur adipisicing elit. This is an inline element Modi eaque debitis eos quod labore maiores delectus asperiores voluptatem voluptas soluta!

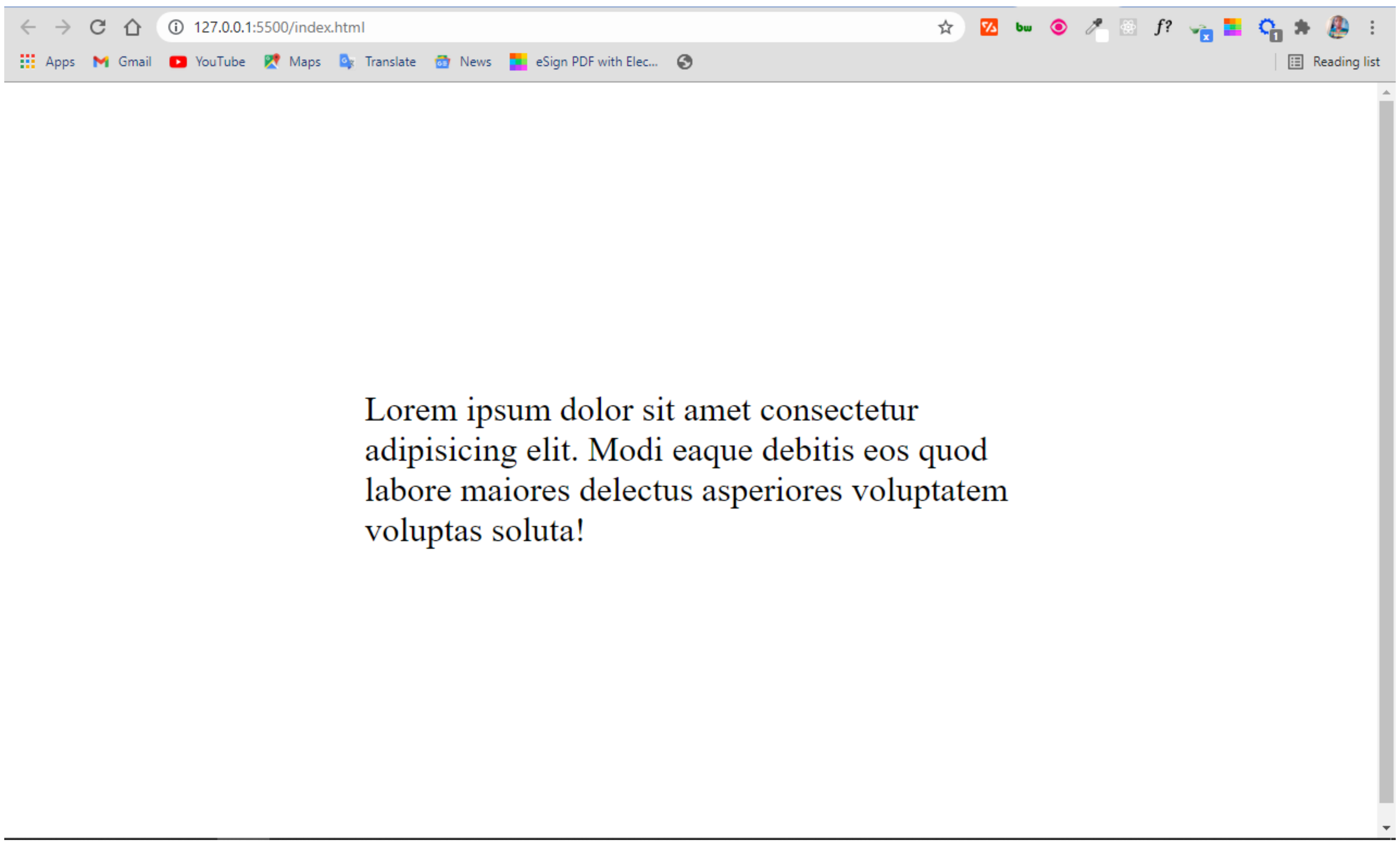
`display: none`

When you set the display property of an element to `none`, the element is completely taken off the page and it doesn't have an effect on the layout.

This also means that devices like screen readers, which make websites accessible to blind people, wont't have access to the element.

Do not confuse `display: none` with `visibility: hidden`. The latter also hides the element, but leaves the space it would normally take open or empty.

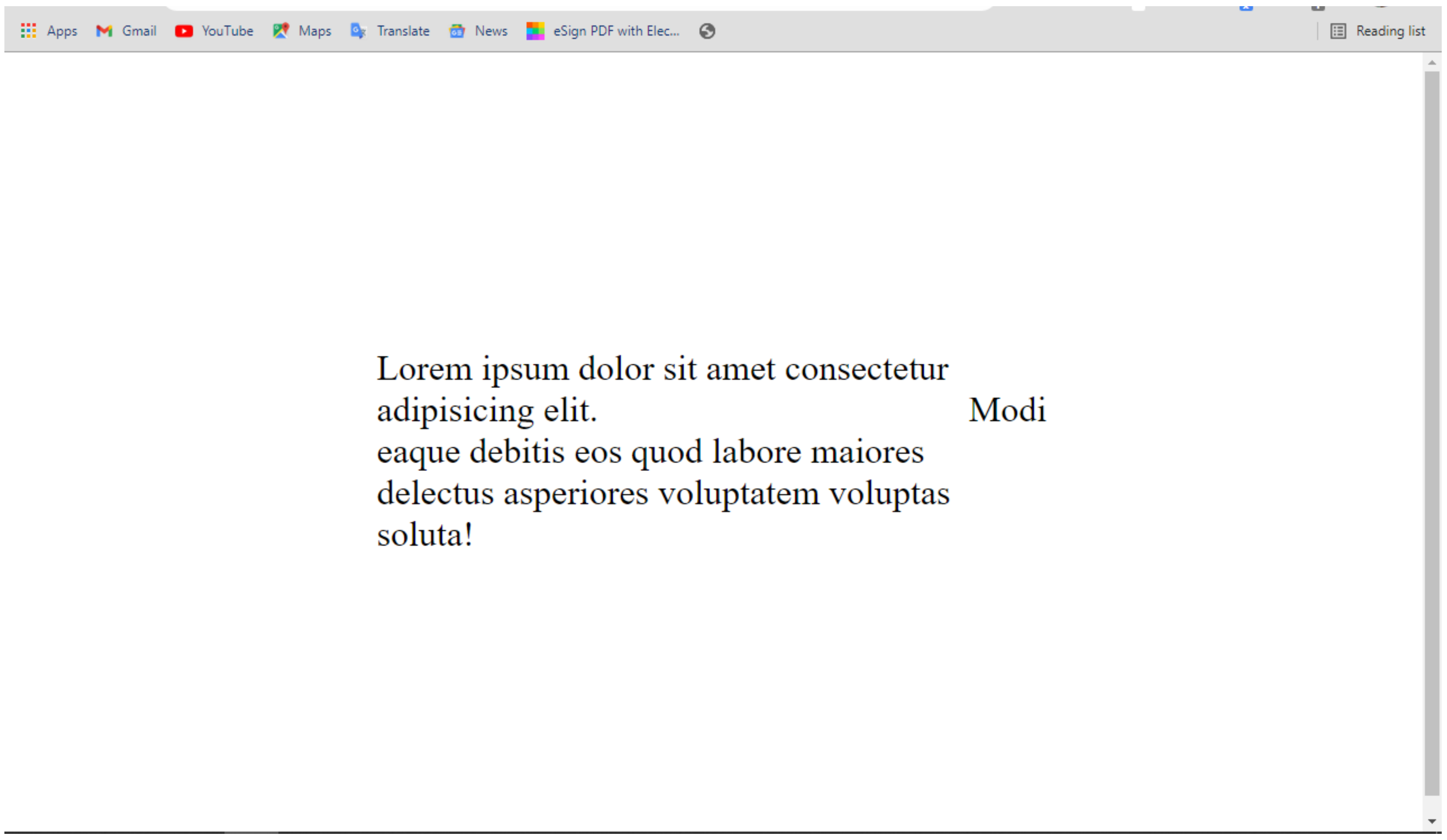
```
span {
        display: none;
        background-color: #006100;
        width: 140px;
        height: 140px;
      }
```



Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur adipisicing elit. Modi eaque debitis eos quod labore maiores delectus asperiores voluptatem voluptas soluta!

Visibility hidden leaves the space occupied by the span element open, as you can see below:

```
span {
        visibility: hidden;
        background-color: #006100;
        width: 140px;
        height: 140px;
        }
```



Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur adipisicing elit. Modi eaque debitis eos quod labore maiores delectus asperiores voluptatem voluptas soluta!

`display: table`

You'll rarely use a display value of `table` these days, but it's still important to know. It was more useful in the past because you would use it for layouts before the advent of floats, Flex, and Grid.

Setting display to `table` makes the element behave like a table. So you can make a replica of an HTML table without using the table element and corresponding elements such as `tr` and `td`.

For example, in HTML, you can make a table with the `<table>` element and also a `<div>`, or any container of your choice.

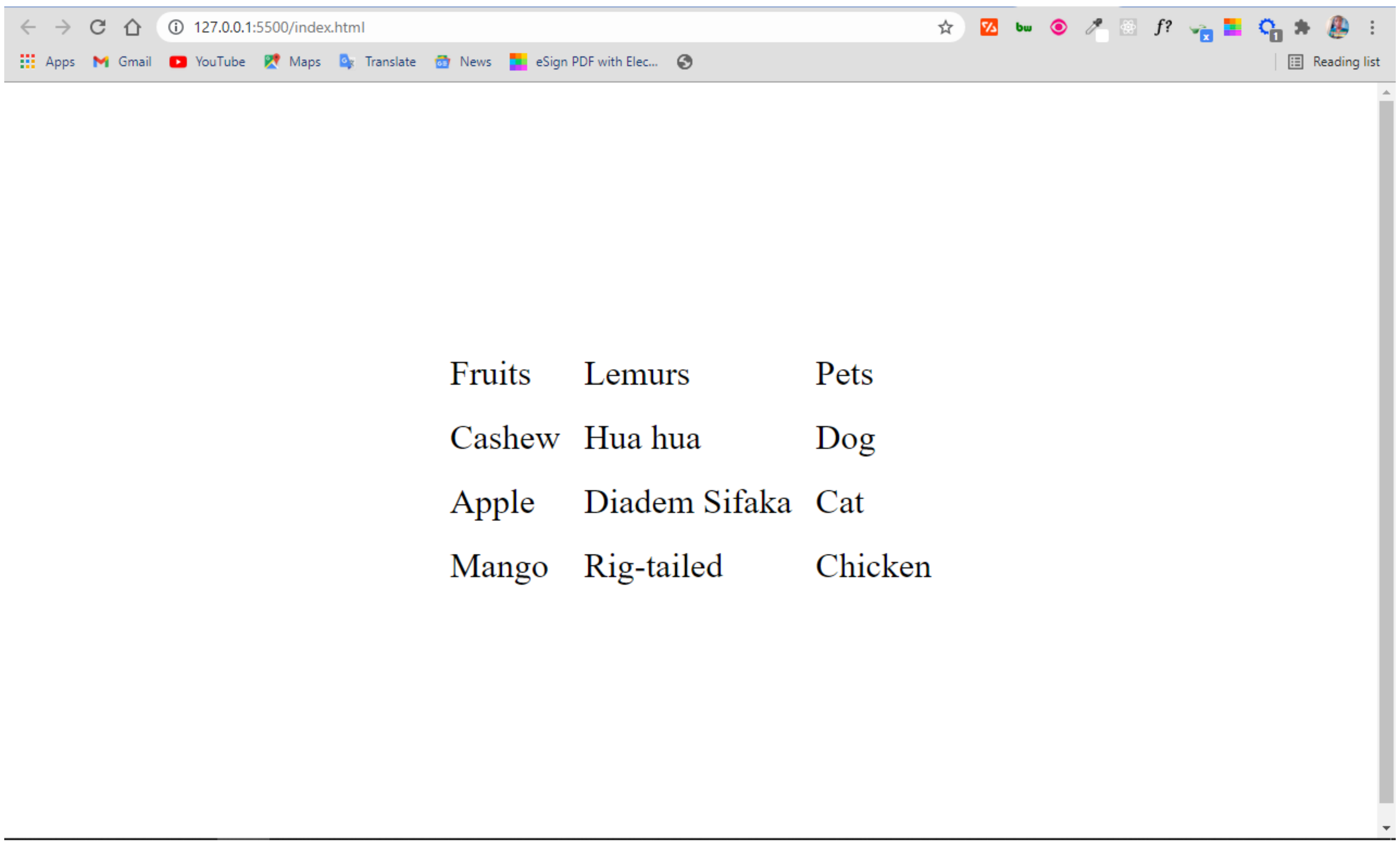
You make a table with the HTML `<table>` element like this:

```
<table>
      <tr>
        <td>Fruits</td>
        <td>Lemurs</td>
        <td>Pets</td>
      </tr>
      <tr>
        <td>Cashew</td>
        <td>Hua hua</td>
        <td>Dog</td>
      </tr>
      <tr>
        <td>Apple</td>
        <td>Diadem Sifaka</td>
        <td>Cat</td>
      </tr>
      <tr>
        <td>Mango</td>
        <td>Rig-tailed</td>
        <td>Chicken</td>
      </tr>
```

```
</table>
```

```
body {
    display: flex;
    align-items: center;
    justify-content: center;
    height: 100vh;
    font-size: 2rem;
}

div {
    max-width: 600px;
}

span {
    display: inline-block;
    background-color: #006100;
    width: 140px;
    height: 140px;
}

tr,
td {
    padding: 10px;
}
```

The result of the HTML and CSS code snippets above looks like this:



Fruits	Lemurs	Pets
Cashew	Hua hua	Dog
Apple	Diadem Sifaka	Cat
Mango	Rig-tailed	Chicken

But you can make the same table with the `<div>` element by setting the respective displays to `table`, `table-row`, and `table-cell`. You will get the same result as you can see below:

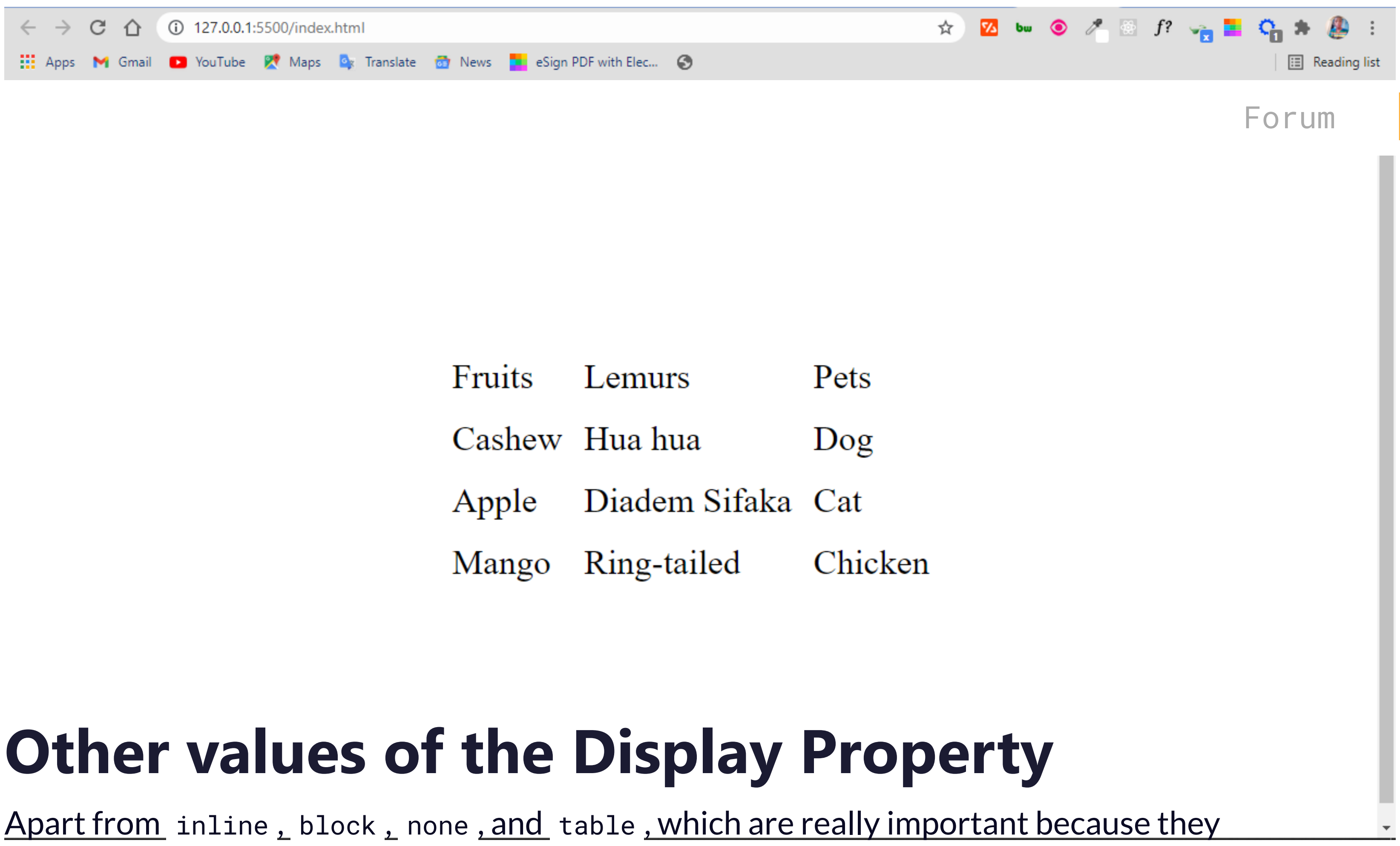
```
<div class="table">
     <div class="row">
       <div class="cell">Fruits</div>
       <div class="cell">Lemurs</div>
```

```
          <div class="cell">Pets</div>

        </div>
        <div class="row">
```

```
          <div class="cell">Dog</div>
        </div>
        <div class="row">
          <div class="cell">Apple</div>
          <div class="cell">Diadem Sifaka</div>
          <div class="cell">Cat</div>
        </div>
        <div class="row">
          <div class="cell">Mango</div>
          <div class="cell">Ring-tailed</div>
          <div class="cell">Chicken</div>
        </div>
</div>
```

```
body {
    display: flex;
    align-items: center;
    justify-content: center;
    height: 100vh;
    font-size: 2rem;
}

div {
    max-width: 600px;
}

span {
    display: inline-block;
    background-color: #006100;
    width: 140px;
    height: 140px;
}

.table {
   display: table;
}

.row {
   display: table-row;
}

.cell {
   display: table-cell;
}

.row,
.cell {
  padding: 10px;
}
```

You still get your table:



Fruits	Lemurs	Pets
Cashew	Hua hua	Dog
Apple	Diadem Sifaka	Cat
Mango	Ring-tailed	Chicken

Other values of the Display Property

Apart from `inline`, `block`, `none`, and `table`, which are really important because they significantly influence how web pages look, there are other values of the `display` property worthy of your attention.

Some of them you'll use all the time without really realizing that they are also part of the display property. And others you won't use often at all.

Let's look at some of them now.

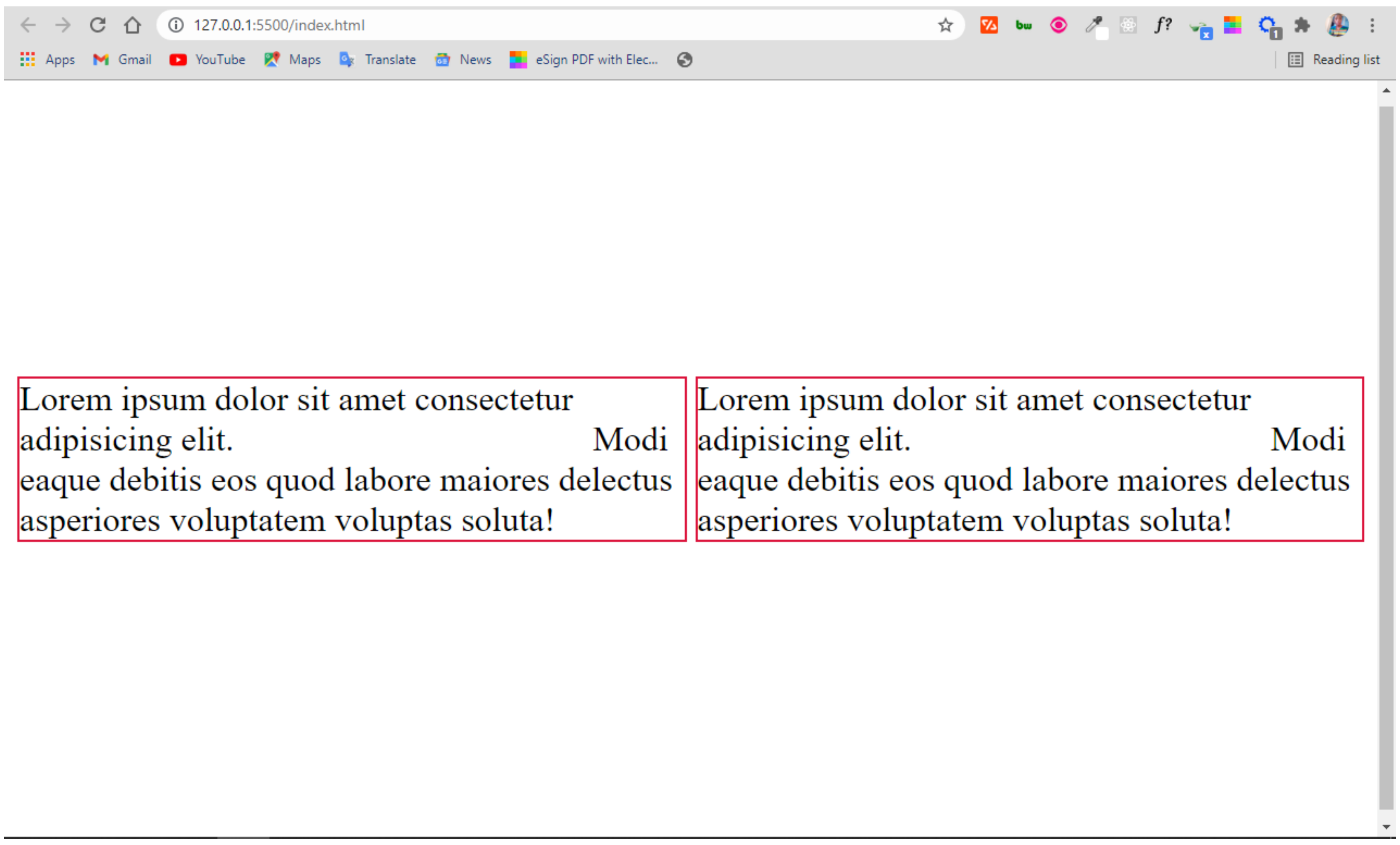
`display: flex`

A display of `flex` gives you access to the Flex layout system, which simplifies how we design and layout our web pages.

```
<div class="container">
      <div class="child">
        Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur adipisicing elit.
        <span>This is an inline element</span> Modi eaque debitis eos quod
        labore maiores delectus asperiores voluptatem voluptas soluta!
      </div>
      <div class="child">
        Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur adipisicing elit.
        <span>This is an inline element</span> Modi eaque debitis eos quod
        labore maiores delectus asperiores voluptatem voluptas soluta!
      </div>
</div>
```

```
.container {
        display: flex;
        align-items: center;
        justify-content: center;
        height: 100vh;
        font-size: 2rem;
}

span {
       visibility: hidden;
```

```
        background-color: #006100;

        width: 140px;
        height: 140px;


.child {
        border: 2px solid crimson;
        margin: 4px;
}
```



Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur adipisicing elit. Modi eaque debitis eos quod labore maiores delectus asperiores voluptatem voluptas soluta!

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur adipisicing elit. Modi eaque debitis eos quod labore maiores delectus asperiores voluptatem voluptas soluta!

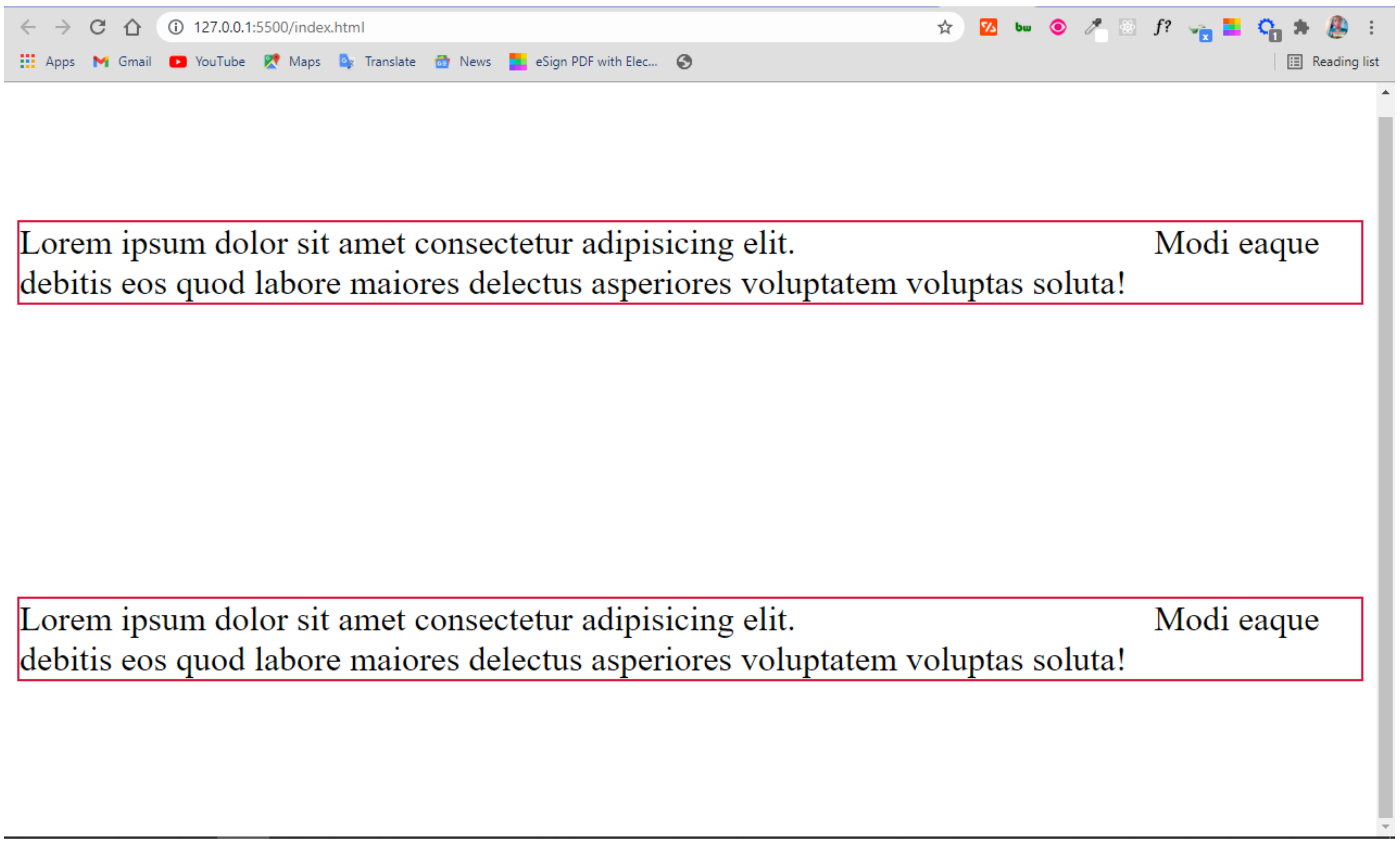
`display: grid`

A display set to `grid` allows you to build layouts with the grid system, which is like an advanced form of flex.

```
<div class="container">
      <div class="child">
        Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur adipisicing elit.
        <span>This is an inline element</span> Modi eaque debitis eos quod
        labore maiores delectus asperiores voluptatem voluptas soluta!
      </div>
      <div class="child">
        Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur adipisicing elit.
        <span>This is an inline element</span> Modi eaque debitis eos quod
        labore maiores delectus asperiores voluptatem voluptas soluta!
      </div>
</div>
```

```
.container {
        display: grid;
        place-items: center;
        height: 100vh;
        font-size: 2rem;
      }
```

```
span {
       visibility: hidden;

        height: 140px;
}

.child {
       border: 2px solid crimson;
       margin: 4px;
}
```



Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur adipisicing elit.   Modi eaque
debitis eos quod labore maiores delectus asperiores voluptatem voluptas soluta!

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur adipisicing elit.   Modi eaque
debitis eos quod labore maiores delectus asperiores voluptatem voluptas soluta!

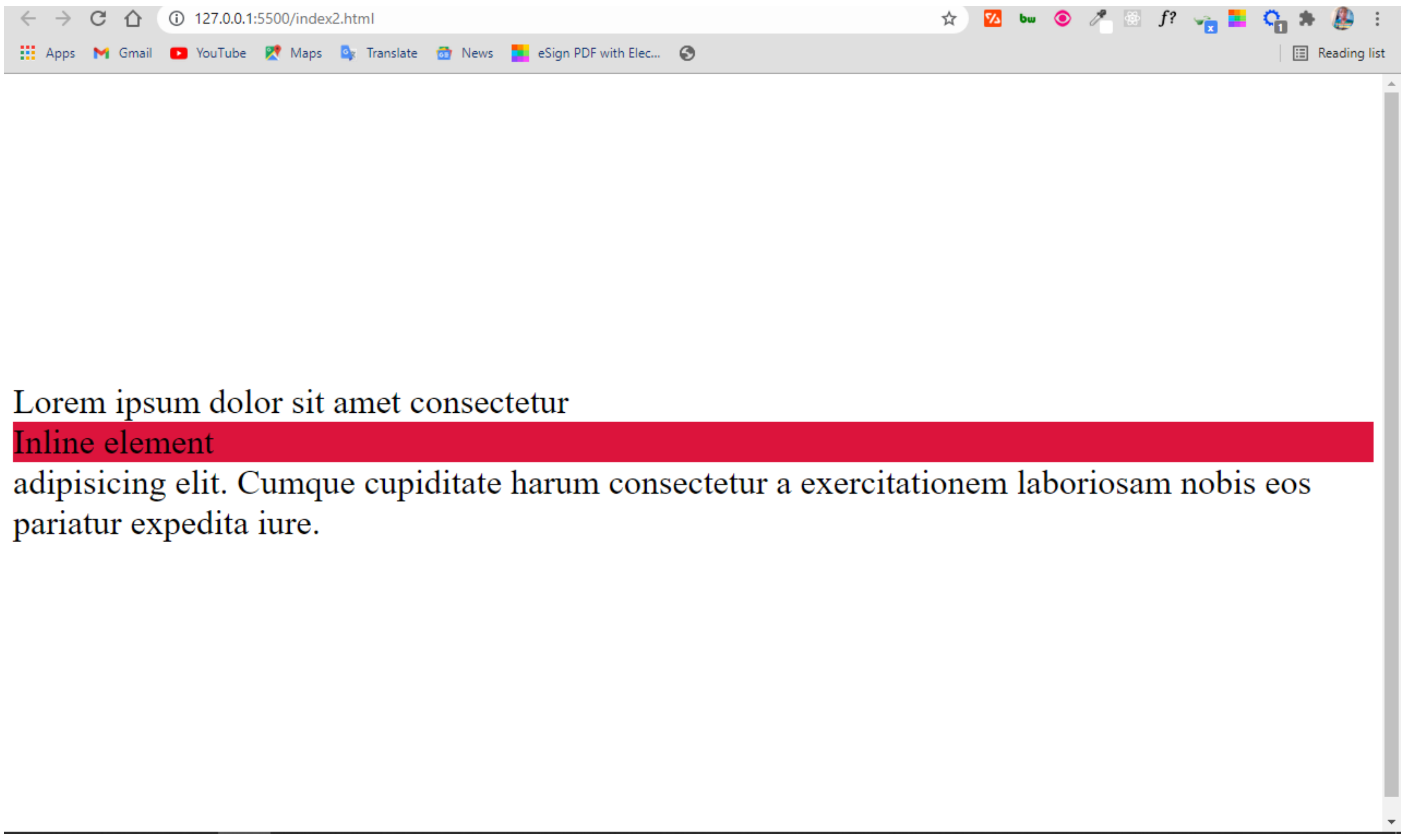
`display: inherit`

This makes the element inherit the display property of its parent. So, if you have a `<span>` tag inside a div and you give the span tag a display of `inherit`, it turns it from inline to block element.

```
<div>
      Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur
      <span>Inline element</span> adipisicing elit. Cumque cupiditate harum
      consectetur a exercitationem laboriosam nobis eos pariatur expedita iure.
</div>
```

```
body {
     display: flex;
     align-items: center;
     justify-content: center;
     height: 100vh;
     font-size: 2rem;
}

span {
     display: inherit;
     background-color: crimson;
```

```
    background-color: crimson;
}
```



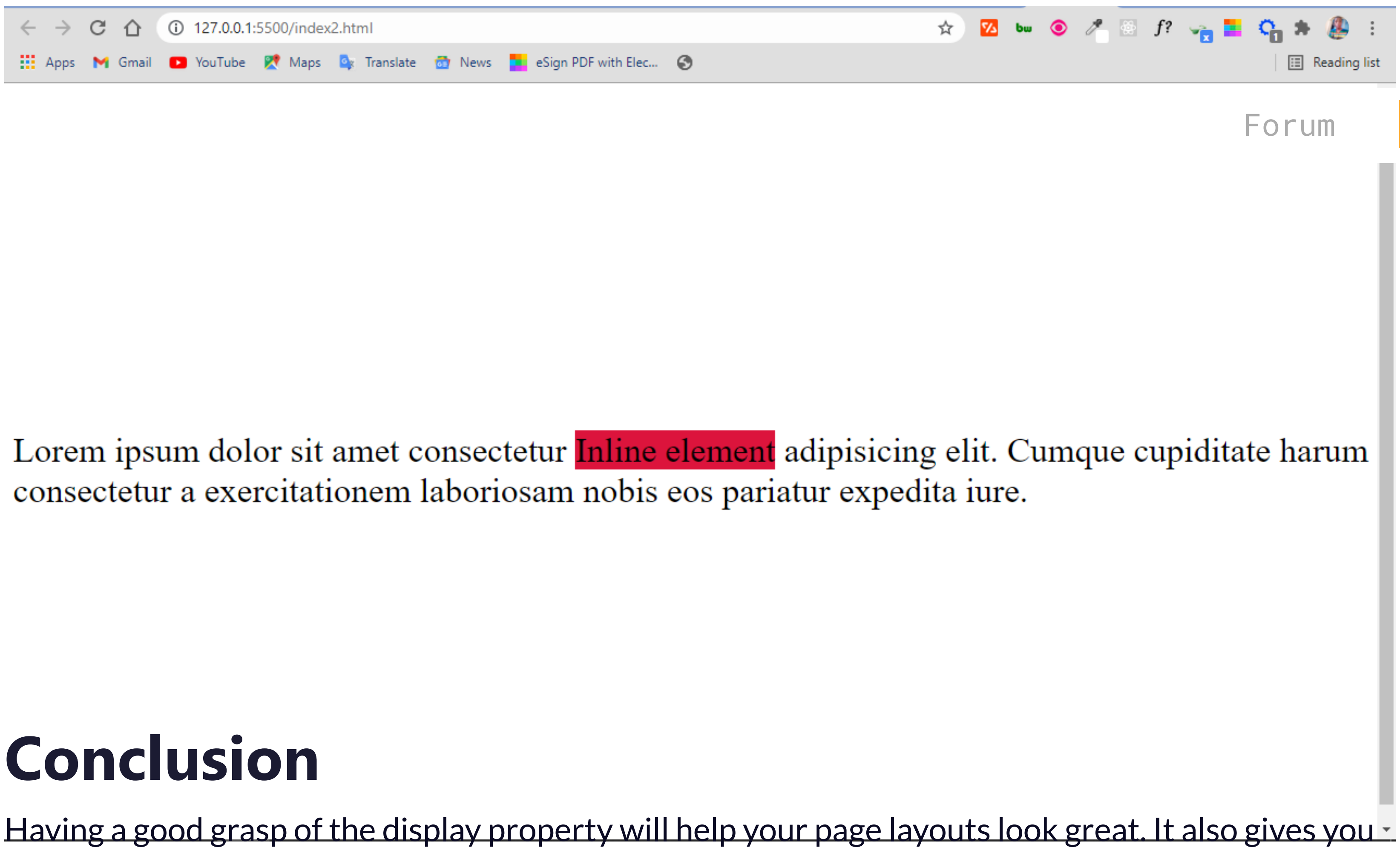
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur
Inline element
adipisicing elit. Cumque cupiditate harum consectetur a exercitationem laboriosam nobis eos pariatur expedita iure.

`display: initial`

This sets the display property of an element to its default value. So, if you set the display property of a span to initial, it remains inline, and if you set the same value for a div, it remains block.

```
<div>
      Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur
      <span>Inline element</span> adipisicing elit. Cumque cupiditate harum
      consectetur a exercitationem laboriosam nobis eos pariatur expedita iure.
</div>
```

```
body {
    display: flex;
    align-items: center;
    justify-content: center;
    height: 100vh;
    font-size: 2rem;
}

span {
    display: initial;
    background-color: crimson;
}
```



Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur Inline element adipisicing elit. Cumque cupiditate harum consectetur a exercitationem laboriosam nobis eos pariatur expedita iure.

Conclusion

Having a good grasp of the display property will help your page layouts look great. It also gives you a lot more control over the way you present your elements while working with CSS.

You can continue to come back to this article for reference too as the display property is always confusing at first until you use it enough to understand it fully.

I hope this article has given you the background knowledge you need in order to put the display property to good use.

Thank you for reading, and keep coding.

Kolade Chris

Web developer and technical writer focusing on frontend technologies.

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