

Pseudo-elements

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;  
}
```

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-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;  
}
```

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

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;  
}
```

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%;  
}
```

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;  
}
```

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);  
}
```

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);  
}
```

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;  
}
```