Exercise 8 – The Box Model

Objective

Use the skills we've learned during the Box Model and Positioning chapter to take finer control of the layout of our page.

Exercise Instructions

Part 1 – Constraining our content

Now that we have learnt all about the box model and positioning, we can use these skills to improve the layout of our websites, no longer limited by the default layout of block and inline elements.

1. The main content of the web pages you find in the Starter folder all stretch from left to right, the full width of the screen. We're going to improve the aesthetics of this by constraining the content to 80% of the full width and centring it on the screen.
2. Wrap the content of each page in a <main> element, similar to what is demonstrated in index.html – from below the <header> element to just before the close of the <body> element.
3. In style.css, add a selector for our new main element and constrain its width to 80%.
4. We also want to centre the main element. This is a block level element, so we can achieve this by setting both its left and right margins to auto.
5. Check the website in your browser, you should find the content has been pulled in away from both left and right edges by 10%.

Part 2 – Grid of Equals

A common UI pattern is the grid of equals. This pattern ensures no single element stands out from the crowd – useful if you do not want to unduly or accidently influence a user's selection. Our courses page is an ideal candidate for such a pattern.

1. Wrap each course (its h3 and p elements) in an article element with a class of "grid".
2. Apply the following styles to the article element using the appropriate selector.

background-color	#ededed
float	Left
margin	1%

width	48%
height	300px
overflow-y	scroll

3. Check in your browser, you should find the 4 courses display in a 2x2 grid rather than stacked vertically down the page.

Part 3 – Fixed Navigation

Next on the agenda is a fixed navigation element.

1. To fix the navigation to the top of the page, we need to add the property to its CSS rules. Find the nav selector in style.css and set the position to be fixed with top and left values of 0.
2. Note that the element is no longer centred as its margins are no longer relevant to its positioning, so we use a combination of a width of 60% and a padding of 20% on the left and right sides.
3. We also need to take measures to show the logo: add the same positioning properties to the logo selector as you did to the nav element.
4. We always want the nav bar to be above all other content, so add a z-index to the relevant elements with a large number.
5. Now that the nav element has been removed from the document flow, it has lost its appearance of having a blue background. There are numerous ways to fix this – we're going to keep things simple and just add a background colour to the nav element directly.