In React Router, both Link and NavLink are used for navigating between different routes in your application. However, there are subtle differences between the two components:

Link

1. Link is a simple component that allows you to navigate to different routes in your application. It is the most basic navigation component provided by React Router.
2. It renders as an anchor (<a>) tag and has a to prop to specify the target route.
3. Link does not provide any built-in styling or active route highlighting. You need to handle styling for the active route manually.

import { Link } from 'react-router-dom';

<Link to="/home">Home</Link>

NavLink

1. NavLink is an enhanced version of Link and is more feature-rich.
2. It also renders as an anchor tag and has a to prop for defining the target route.
3. NavLink provides additional features, such as active route highlighting and styling.
4. It adds the CSS class active to the link for the current route, allowing you to style the active link differently.
5. NavLink offers the activeClassName and activeStyle props to specify the class name or inline styles for the active link.
6. We import the CSS module that defines the activeLink class.
7. We use the activeClassName prop to apply the activeLink class for the active route.
8. We use the activeStyle prop to specify inline styles for the active links. In this case, we set the text color to different values for each route.

import { NavLink } from 'react-router-dom';

<NavLink to="/home" activeClassName="active">Home</NavLink>

Here's a summary of the differences:

1. Link is a basic navigation component, while NavLink is an enhanced navigation component.
2. Link does not provide built-in active route styling or highlighting.
3. NavLink includes active route styling features, like adding the active class, activeClassName, and activeStyle.
4. Use Link for simple navigation where you don't need active route styling.
5. Use NavLink when you want to style active links or apply specific styles for active routes.
6. The choice between Link and NavLink depends on your specific styling and routing needs in your React application. If you need active route highlighting and styling, NavLink is the preferred option.

We can also add styling to active class globally

/\* nav.module.css \*/

:global(.active) {

    /\* Global styles for the active link \*/

    font-weight: bold;

    color: blue;

  }

import React from 'react';

import { NavLink } from 'react-router-dom';

import styles from './nav.module.css'; // Import the CSS Module

function Navigation() {

  return (

    <nav>

      <ul>

        <li>

          <NavLink to="/home" activeClassName="active">

            Home

          </NavLink>

        </li>

        <li>

          <NavLink to="/about" activeClassName="active">

            About

          </NavLink>

        </li>

        <li>

          <NavLink to="/contact" activeClassName="active">

            Contact

          </NavLink>

        </li>

      </ul>

    </nav>

  );

}

export default Navigation;

The other way we can use like this

/\* nav.module.css \*/

nav :global(.active) {

    /\* Global styles for the active link \*/

    font-weight: bold;

    color: blue;

  }

import React from 'react';

import { NavLink } from 'react-router-dom';

import styles from './nav.module.css'; // Import the CSS Module

function Navigation() {

  return (

    <nav>

      <ul>

        <li>

          <NavLink to="/home">

            Home

          </NavLink>

        </li>

        <li>

          <NavLink to="/about">

            About

          </NavLink>

        </li>

        <li>

          <NavLink to="/contact">

            Contact

          </NavLink>

        </li>

      </ul>

    </nav>

  );

}

export default Navigation;