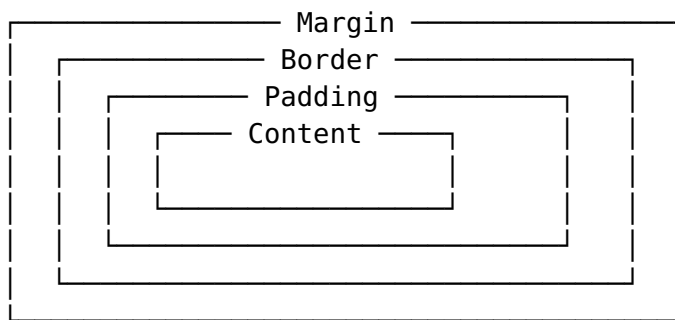


CSS Box Model — Reference Guide

Overview

The CSS Box Model is the foundation of layout on the web. Every HTML element is treated as a rectangular box consisting of four areas: content, padding, border, and margin.

The Four Layers



Properties

Property	Description	Example
width / height	Size of the content area	width: 300px;
padding	Inner spacing	padding: 16px 24px;
border	Visible boundary	border: 2px solid #333;
margin	Outer spacing	margin: 0 auto;

box-sizing

```
/* Default: width = content only */  
.default { box-sizing: content-box; width: 300px; padding: 20px; }  
/* Total width = 300 + 20 + 20 = 340px */
```

```
/* Recommended: width = content + padding + border */
```

```
.better { box-sizing: border-box; width: 300px; padding: 20px; }  
/* Total width = 300px (padding included) */
```

Best practice — apply globally:

```
*, *::before, *::after { box-sizing: border-box; }
```

Margin Collapsing

Adjacent vertical margins collapse into a single margin (the larger one wins):

```
.top { margin-bottom: 20px; }  
.bottom { margin-top: 30px; }  
/* Actual gap = 30px, not 50px */
```

Key Takeaways

1. Always use `box-sizing: border-box` globally.
2. Use `margin: 0 auto` to center block elements horizontally.
3. Vertical margins collapse; horizontal margins do not.
4. Use browser DevTools to inspect the box model visually.