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Forms

Forms

Forms can be a surprisingly tricky element to style because you are asking for a lot of interaction from your user, and the burden is on you as the designer to make it clear what exactly you are asking them to do. However, with a few simple design changes you can make it much easier for your user to navigate your form. Here are some key design elements to keep in mind when designing forms.

- **white space** - It is important to separate your form elements from your other content, otherwise it can easily be skipped over. It is also important to use white space surrounding each of your input elements to help draw your user's eye from the start to the end of your form. White space can also give the impression of simplicity and ease, an overcrowded form can seem daunting and tiring to fill out.
- **borders** - Possibly one of the most important design elements of your forms are borders. Borders give your user a visual clue that they should enter text, or select something from a drop down. When you eliminate all borders it is impossible to tell what is a form and what is just static text.

- **labels** - Each input should have a label communicating to the user what information you are asking them to submit. You will want to make sure this text is aligned and flows with the input element so it is clear what label is associated with which input. One of the easiest ways to make sure there is a label is to put the label inside the input text box as demonstrated in some of our sample designs.
- **input sizes** - You can help the user quickly assess how much text you are asking them to provide by how big your input element is. A very small input element will infer that you are only asking for a small number of characters, and a very large box with multiple lines can infer that you are asking a lot more from your user. It is also important to try and gauge the input size accordingly so your user doesn't run out of space as they are entering text.
- **pseudo-classes** - Perhaps one of the best uses of pseudo-classes is with forms. Pseudo-classes can help provide extra feedback as your user interacts with each of your form elements. You'll often see *hover* used to expose more information, *active* used to help a user understand which element they are currently interacting with, and more.
- **submit button** - Don't forget some of the lessons learned in Module 2: it is important to make your button look like a button. You will want to make sure that your submit button is placed so that it is obvious after a user has entered in all the requested info.

Here is an HTML/CSS form:

Sign Up

Given name

Family name

Email

Submit

You might never know it, but each of the 4 elements below the title are intended for the user to interact with. By stripping them of their styles you can see how important it is to add visual cues for your user.

Form 1

The first form design uses basic layout to give each input element a clear label, space and area for input followed by a clear submit button. This design also used pseudo classes to engage the user, which you can see in action in the Code Pen



Sign Up

Given name

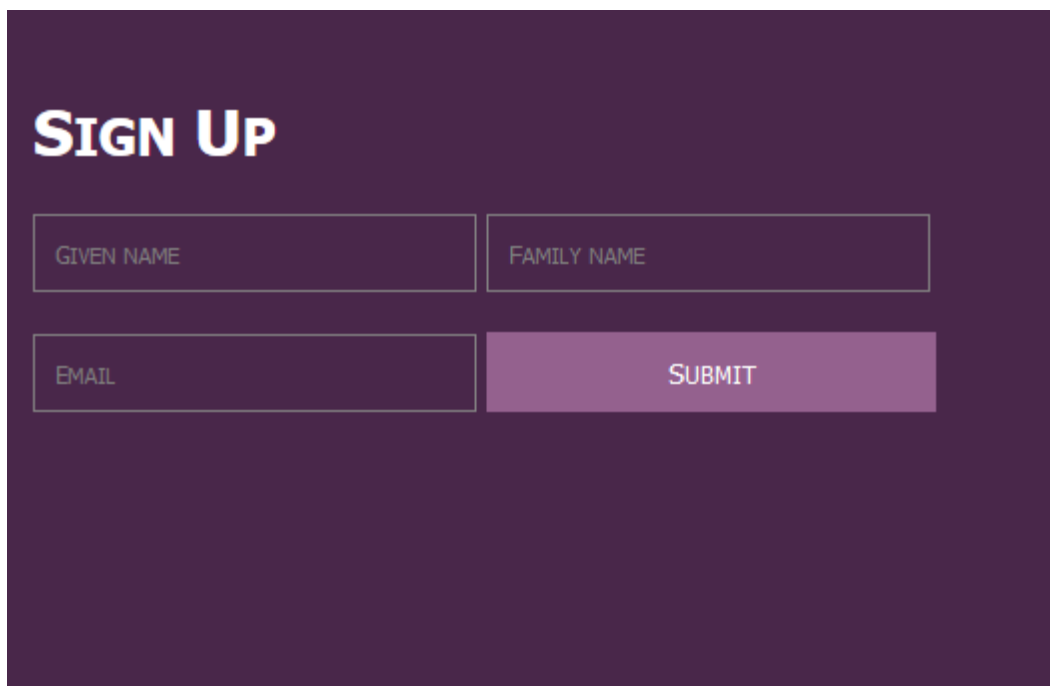
Family name

Email

Submit

Form 2

This form design is more minimalist, using the clear and consistent design and layout to help the user feel like the form is extra short.



SIGN UP

GIVEN NAME

FAMILY NAME

EMAIL

SUBMIT

Form 3

This form design leaves lots of white space to help it feel clean and simple.

Sign Up

Given name

Family name

Email

Submit

HTML

CSS

Result

EDIT ON

```
height: 100px;
}
form {
  padding: 30px;
  width: 500px;
}
/* Bad Design */
#uglyForm input {
  border: 0px;
}
#uglyForm button {
  background-color: white;
  border: 0px;
}
```

Resources

Learn About Verified Certificates

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