Mastering CSS with Mark Lassoff

Section 4: Styling Forms and Buttons

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CSS For Forms

Forms are essential.

Forms are where a user "converts" – They decide whether or not they are going to fill out their email address or purchase an e-commerce item. Designers will often spend a lot of time on the front page of a site and not enough time on the forms. The forms need to be usable and attractive for them to work.

HTML Form

This is a basic form in HTML that we will be styling. The first style is for the #container which the form content away from the document edges.

We've chosen to use placeholders instead of Labels to make the form as clean as possible.

Contemporary forms have done away with traditional labels and used placeholders instead to save real estate on the form itself. There is a tradeoff, however. While placeholders may give the form a more modern appearance, the placeholders are not as accessible. Labels actually increase the

clickable area for someone filling out a form, while, placeholders require you click on the actual form item to use the field.

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
<head>
        <title>CSS for forms</title>
        <style>
        #container { margin: 5px; padding: 5px; }
        </style>
</head>
<body>
<div id="container">
        <h2>Learn To Code</h2>
        <form action="#" method="post">
        <input type="text" id="first" placeholder="First Name"/>
<br/>
        <input type="text" id="last" placeholder="Last Name"/>
<br/>
        <input type="text" id="email" placeholder="email"/>  <br/>
        <input type="Phone" id="phone" placeholder="Phone
Number"/>  <br/>
        <select>
                <option>Level of Education</option>
                <option>Did not Graduate</option>
                <option>High School or GED</option>
                <option>Some College</option>
                <option>Undergraduate Degree</option>
                <option>Graduate Degree</option>
        </select>  <br/>
        <p><input type="checkbox">Please send additional
information about learning to code. <br/>
        <button>Submit</button>
        </form>
        </div>
</body>
</html>
```

Form Surface

Here, we're going to style the actual surface of the form.

```
form
{
width: 80%;
border: 1px solid black;
padding: 10px;
background-color: #fafafa;
}
```

- We're adding a width of 80%, so the form goes almost all the way across the screen.
- The **border** is added so we can see the outline of the form.
- **Padding** is added to pull the elements away from the side.
- Adding a **background-color** to the form to bring the form together.

Form elements

It is crucial to think about how the user will interact with the form elements. You should also keep in mind the diversity of devices the users will be using. For example, how will the form look on a mobile device?

Text Inputs

Let's focus on making each element touch-friendly for our mobile users.

```
input
{
width: 100%;
height: 35px;
margin-bottom: 20px;
```

```
font-size: 1.75em;
background-color: #ececec;
border: none;
border-bottom: 2px dashed black;
}
```

- `width` of 100% will make each input element stretch across the form which will look very good on a mobile device.
- Adding a `height` in pixels will make the input more touch friendly.
- Using a `margin-bottom` will put some extra space between each input element.
- We'll adjust the font inside the element by setting `font-size` to 1.75em.
- For the `background-color` of the text elements, we'll make them slightly darker than the form itself.
- Setting the `border` value to none makes it look cleaner.
- `border-bottom` provides a nice visual look and keeps the usability in focus.

Remember, when it comes to mobile forms, not all of your users will likely be dexterous millennials. For the more fat-fingered among us (your instructor included), small form items are challenging to use.

Styling the Select

We want the select element to have a similar look and feel to the text input elements, so we'll use common style rules.

```
select
{
width: 100%;
font-size: 1.75em;
background-color: #ececec;
}
```

- **width**, **font-size** and **background-color** are reused to keep the style alike.
- Keeping with the overall form style, **border** is set to none as well.

Styling the Checkbox

The checkbox is displayed by using the input tag, like other form elements. We have to differentiate it from the other input elements on the form, so we use the attribute selector.

```
input[type=checkbox]
{
width: 20px;
height: 20px;
zoom: 2;
}
```

- We're setting the **width**, **height** and **zoom** to create a nice sized checkbox that is easy to tap on a mobile device.

Labels

To style the text after the checkbox, we'll need to select the p tag.

```
form p
{
font-family: Arial;
font-size: 1.5em;
}
```

- Setting the **font-family** and **font-size** makes for a clean label for the checkbox.

Buttons

Continuing the theme of making the form usable on a mobile device, we'll want to have a big, noticeable button on our form.

button

```
{
width: 100%;
height: 35px;
font-size: 1.75em;
background-color: orange;
border-radius: 10px;
}
```

- Let's set the `width` to 100% to make it full width.
- The `height` gets set to 40px to be close to the same size as the other elements.
- `font-size` set to 1.75em again to match the other elements.
- Let's pick a `background-color` that adds a little urgency.
- Adding a `border-radius` to make it a little fancier.

Making the Label for the Checkbox clickable.

By switching over to a `label` tag for the checkbox the user can click on the label to toggle the checkbox.

The method of tying the label to the checkbox is to use `for` and `name` attributes. The name on the checkbox element and the for attribute on the label element should have the same value, tying the two elements together.

We'll update the HTML:

```
<input type="checkbox" name="mailMe">
<label for="mailMe">
Please send additional information about learning to code.
</label>
```

Notice that the **for** and **name** attributes have the same value tying the two elements together.

The CSS for the p tag is no longer used so we'll need to change it to label :

```
form label {
font-family: Arial;
font-size: 1.5em;
}
```

The advantage is that now the whole checkbox and label can be clicked, making the form more usable for mobile device users.

Submit this:
Puppy sign-up form

A local Canine school needs a new form for owners that want to sign up their puppies for training. They've asked you to assist in creating and styling the form. Make sure that your form is easily used by people on both mobile devices and full sized laptops.

The need the form to include the following:

- Owners name
- Phone number
- Email Address
- Puppy's name
- Birthdate

- breed
- Checkboxes for Vaccinations of Parvo, Distemper, and Rabies
- A select box to choose which way they heard of the school
  - Radio
  - Driving by
  - Friends/Neighbors

AIRLINE	FLIGHT NO.	TO	TIME	GATE	STATUS
Delta	4148	Detroit	5:45am		ON TIME
Delta	2669	Atlanta	6:00am	2	ON TIME
American	5678	Washington-DCA	6:08am		ON TIME
JetBlue	1895	Orlando	6:30am		ON TIME
American	3017	Chicago-O`Hare	7:00am		ON TIME
Delta	4930	Atlanta	7:00am		ON TIME
American	5254	Washington-DCA	3:00pm	H	BOARDING
American	5019	Washington-DCA	4:29pm	A	Now 4:50P
Delta	4135	Detroit	4:29pm	C	ON TIME
American	3019	Chicago-O`Hare	4:30pm	G	BOARDING
Delta	2270	Atlanta	5:29pm	2	ON TIME
American	5401	Washington-DCA	5:29pm		ON TIME
United	3836	Chicago-O`Hare	6:00pm		ON TIME
JetBlue	813	Ft.Lauderdale	6:46pm		ON TIME
American	5388	Charlotte, NC	6:59pm		ON TIME
Delta	3281	Atlanta	7:16pm		ON TIME
JetBlue	857	W. Palm Beach	7:47pm		ON TIME
American	5236	Washington-DCA	8:49pm		ON TIME
JetBlue	2167	W. Palm Beach	9:00pm		ON TIME