

AQUENT

GYMNASIUM

JQUERY: BUILDING BLOCKS

Lesson 1

MATERIALS & ASSIGNMENT

THIS LESSON'S CORE CONCEPTS

At its most basic, jQuery helps you quickly find HTML elements in your document, and easily do something to them. jQuery helps you out in four fundamental ways:

1. jQuery helps you avoid annoyance. It takes tasks that are complex and annoying to program – like building cross-platform code to iterate through every element in your document and find all the ones with a certain class – and makes this incredibly easy. For example, this syntax performs that task:
`$('.certain-class')`
2. jQuery hides cross-browser issues, both with out-of-date browsers and with new, not-yet-universal features. Old versions of IE still in widespread use handle transparency, for example, in a completely different, nonstandard way, but jQuery takes care of it for you. Meanwhile, new features like CSS animations require handwritten JavaScript fallbacks when run in browsers more than a year or two old; again, jQuery takes care of that for you.
3. jQuery makes hard things easy. For example, animating anything smoothly requires sophisticated “Bézier curve” math, which jQuery includes under the hood so you don’t have to learn it.
4. jQuery does... everything else. Its simple but sophisticated plugin architecture has given rise to an enormous ecosystem of plugins that can do just about anything you need them to do. In this course we’ll be looking at two – a slideshow creator and a Twitter plugin – as well as showing you how to write your own.
 - jQuery has become the most popular JavaScript library because its simple, elegant syntax hides a ton of power and optimization, while its plugin ecosystem means that the basics are just the beginning. Furthermore, its popularity with web developers has led to a popularity with employers, too.
 - At its most basic, jQuery helps you quickly find HTML elements in your document, and easily do something with them. To find elements, you pass a selector string into the jQuery function (`$`). jQuery selectors are the same as CSS selectors. For example:
 - Select all image elements: `$('img')`.
 - To select by ID, use a hashtag symbol: `$('#element-id')`.
 - To select by class name, use a period: `$('.class-name')`.
 - As in CSS, you can string selectors together to select children, descendants, etc.: `$('.class-name-1.class-name-2 > img')`.
 - The jQuery function returns a jQuery array of matching elements, which lets you perform actions or do further selections: `$('.gallery-items').first()`.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Quiz
2. Review basic and hierarchical selector syntax at <http://oscarotero.com/jquery/>.

READING

- Andrée's introduction to jQuery is excellent. So far we've covered the first three sections.
<http://andreehansson.se/the-basics-of-jquery/>
- Since jQuery selectors are a superset of CSS selectors, it's a good idea to keep a CSS cheat sheet around for reference. This is an excellent one.
<http://www.addedbytes.com/download/css-cheat-sheet-v2/png/>