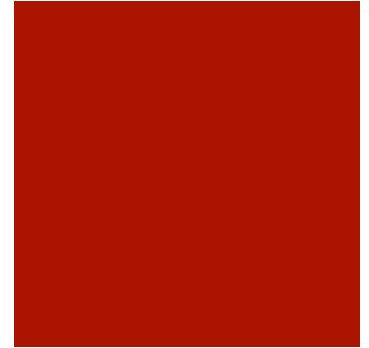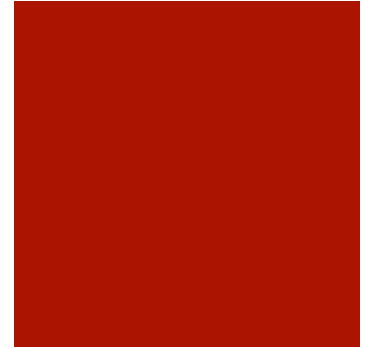# PHP: Part 7
Sessions in PHP

Using PHP to write to a div on a page

- Recall that if your form calls the same .php file that is already running, you have the opportunity to write information – such as the fields on a form – to another part of the same .html file (specifically to another <div>
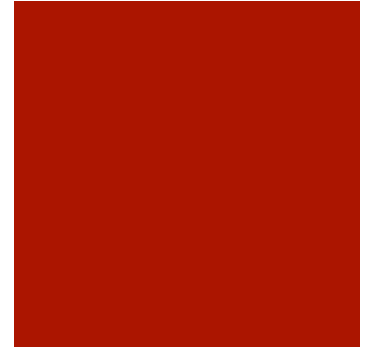
PHP: Sessions

- PHP sessions allow you to carry data for a user over a series of web pages

- When a user opens a session, PHP generates a unique session ID which references that specific session and the associated data.

- Session information is temporary and is deleted after the user has left the website.
  - For permanent data, one would use an external file or database.

Sessions vs Cookies

- Cookies are stored client-side ... but sessions data are stored on the server.

- Sessions can be used even if the user has set set his/her browser not to accept cookies

- Sessions can hold more data than cookies

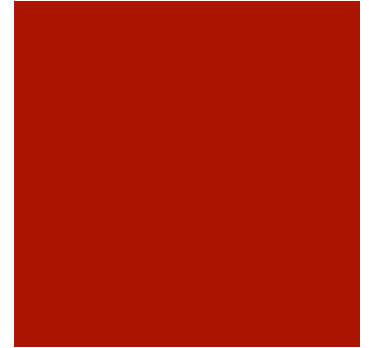- Sessions are considered more secure than cookies

Starting a PHP session

- Be sure to start the session before beginning any HTML:

```php
<?php session_start(); ?>
<html>
<body>
  ....
</body>
</html>
```

Session functions and the super-global:

- **$_SESSION** is the superglobal used to store variables during the session.
  - session_start()
    - Note – PHP is "smart" enough to ignore subsequent calls to session_start() while a session is in progress!
  - session_destroy()
  - session_unset[' … ']
    - to release a specific variable
- The default session duration is set in php.ini