Understanding CSS

Robin has become familiar with the foundations of HTML. She can now identify several building blocks of a webpage, like headings and paragraphs. This knowledge will help her identify where to find the data that she wants on a particular webpage. But as Robin encounters references to using CSS selectors in web scraping, she realizes that she needs to learn about CSS.

Recall that you can use **Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)** to tailor the appearance of HTML code in the browser. This ability to customize the look and feel of a website is essential to creating visually appealing content.

Once you understand how to use CSS to build websites, you can apply this knowledge to your web scraping project. In this lesson, you'll learn firsthand how CSS works by changing the style of HTML elements. You'll then receive an introduction to CSS selectors, like `id` and `class`. Finally, you'll learn how to apply your knowledge of CSS to scraping a webpage. Specifically, you'll learn how to use CSS selectors to target elements to extract data from.

Using CSS to Style Elements

To begin, create a separate folder to use for your CSS examples in this lesson. In that folder, create a file named `index1.html`, and then paste the following code into that file:

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html lang="en">

<head>
    <meta charset="UTF-8">
    <meta http-equiv="X-UA-Compatible" content="IE=edge">
    <meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1.0"
    <title>Document</title>
</head>
```

```
<style>
    p {
        color: blue;
    }
</style>

<body>
    <h1>First heading</h1>
    <p>First paragraph</p>

    <h1>Second heading</h1>
    <p>Second paragraph</p>
</body>

</html>
```

Open the `index1.html` file in a browser. The text in both paragraphs is blue.

Let's examine the preceding code in more detail. The body section should seem familiar. But preceding the body section, a new `<style />` tag appears, as the following code show:

```
<style>
    p {
        color: blue;
    }
</style>
```

Why do we use style tags? They contain code that instructs the browser to display the HTML elements in particular ways—for example, with particular font sizes or font colors. In this paragraph, the style instructs the browser to display the text in blue. Notice that the `p` element is followed by braces. And, the `color` value, which is `blue`, specifies that the text color should be blue. With this feature of CSS, we can change the color of all the `p` elements with a single style!

NOTE

We typically place CSS stylings in separate files that we import into the HTML document. This way, we have a better organization and separation of code. But in this lesson, we'll keep the CSS code in the HTML document for simplicity.

CSS also makes many types of stylings possible. Examples include styling the background color of an element (or of an entire page) and the text alignment. In this lesson, we'll style just font colors.

Now, practice using CSS to style elements yourself in the following Skill Drill:

SKILL DRILL

Create `index2.html`, and then copy the code from `index1.html` into it. Add a CSS style that changes the color of all `h1` elements to yellow.

Now that you've learned the basics of using CSS to style elements, you'll next learn how to style unique elements on a webpage.

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