Introduction to jQuery plugins

What is really great about jQuery is that you can think of it as an engine giving you the ability to create your own car around it. By allowing developers to extend its native abilities, jQuery has given rise to an ecosystem of **plugins**, or scripts, that run cohesively with jQuery as their backbone to deliver ready-to-use features - **widgets**.

Developers have gone crazy with this feature and have built thousands of awesome plugins covering everything from responsive web design, slideshows, carousels, form validators, scrolling effects, photo galleries, modal dialog and so much more. Moreover jQuery makes it really easy for you to understand how plugins are created. In a nutshell, you can package great looking and complete feature kits and simply drop them into your site in the blink of an eye.

Loading a jQuery plugin

Typically a jQuery plugin may contain a set of CSS files that deliver the look and feel of the feature that you're attempting to implement such as a photo slideshow, an HTML structure guide that defines the layout of the feature, and finally the JavaScript file that contains your plugin's code. To install a plugin you first load up the CSS files that come with the plugin, then load jQuery and a script tag that brings your plugin in. After this you implement your plugin as needed in your code.

You can visit unheap.com for some of the best jQuery plugins out there.

Introduction to plugins for the lesson

In this lesson we'll take a look at four plugins that allow you to rapidly build and implement a photo carousel, modal dialogs, parallax scrolling ability and a form validator. We will also create a very simple jQuery plugin of our own. So let's begin!