

# What does the double colon (::) mean in CSS?

Asked 6 years, 3 months ago   Active 4 years, 7 months ago   Viewed 31k times



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For example:



```
input[type=text]::-ms-clear { display: none; }
```



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CSS

edited Feb 11 '15 at 7:16



Salman A

195k 69 354 455

asked May 23 '13 at 1:04



Dilhan Jayathilake

694 2 8 14

## 3 Answers



It means *pseudo element* selector. It means the *element* to the right doesn't exist in the normal DOM, but can be selected.

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A pseudo-element is made of two colons (::) followed by the name of the pseudo-element.



[Source](#)



It was originally only a single colon, but was changed to differentiate it from *pseudo classes* (like `:hover`, `:first-child`, `:not` etc). It's best to use `:` for *before* and *after* pseudo elements since the single colon has better browser support, namely in earlier IE versions.

edited Feb 11 '15 at 7:14



Salman A

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answered May 23 '13 at 1:05



alex

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The `::` operator indicates you are selecting a *pseudo element*, one which does not actually exist as an element but can still be targeted for styling.

Example of this include several vendor-specific implementations such as the `-ms-clear` sample you provide, most browsers also have pseudo elements to style scroll bars and other native UI elements, but there are also a lot of [predefined pseudo elements](#) which can be referenced for practical reasons, such as `first-line` and `first-letter`.

The `:before` and `:after` pseudo elements even allow you to insert actual content into the page using CSS with the `content` rule.

answered May 23 '13 at 1:11

[Niels Keurentjes](#)

33.9k 6 69 114



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CSS3 changes the way pseudo-elements are selected, as the W3C wanted to distinguish pseudo-classes like `a:visited` from pseudo-elements like `p::first-line`. See [Advanced CSS Selectors](#).

answered May 23 '13 at 1:44

[Eric Jablow](#)

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