

# **LECTURE 5**

# **MINING WEB**

# **CONTENT II**

**LEK HSIANG HUI**

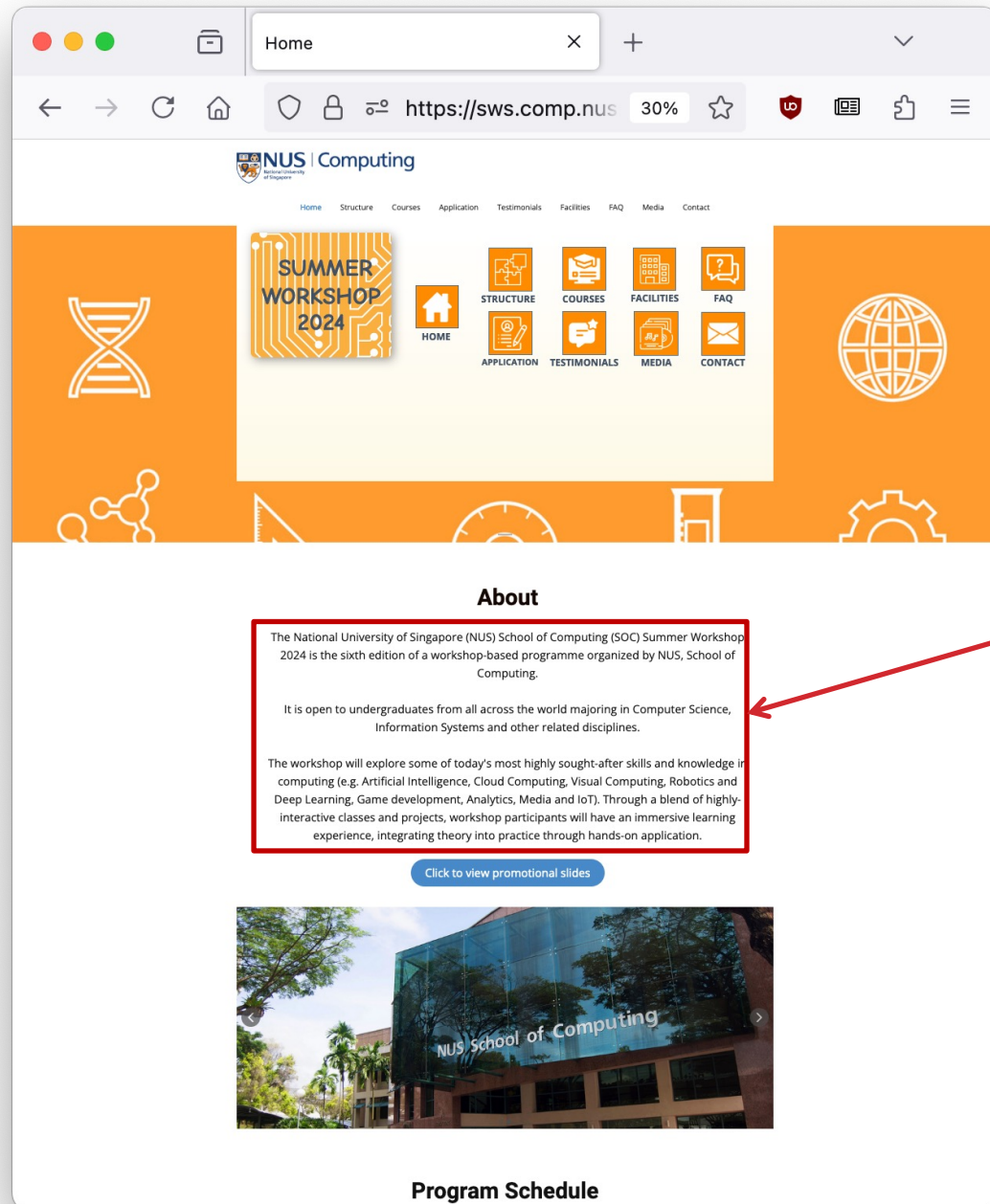
# **OUTLINE**

**Document Object Model (DOM)**

**XPath**

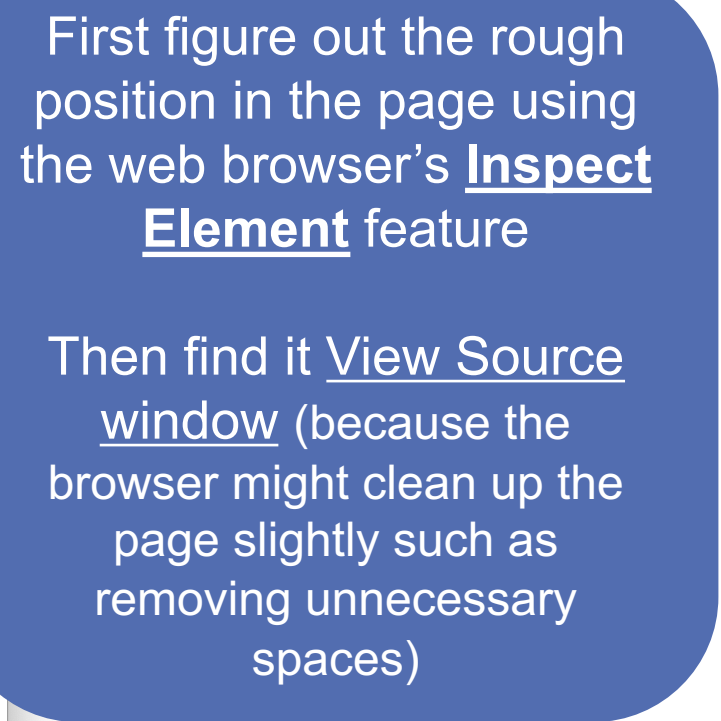
**CSS Selectors**

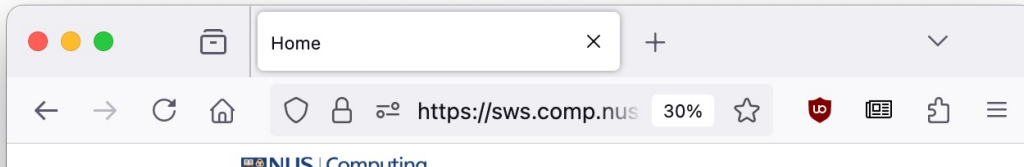
**Extracting Content using HTML Parser**



Recap: Extracting contents from HTML source


Suppose we want to extract the contents under the About





Write the regular expression:

```
<p class="u-align-center u-text u-text-2">(.*?)</p>
```




### About

The National University of Singapore (NUS) School of Computing (SOC) Summer Workshop 2024 is the sixth edition of a workshop-based programme organized by NUS, School of Computing.

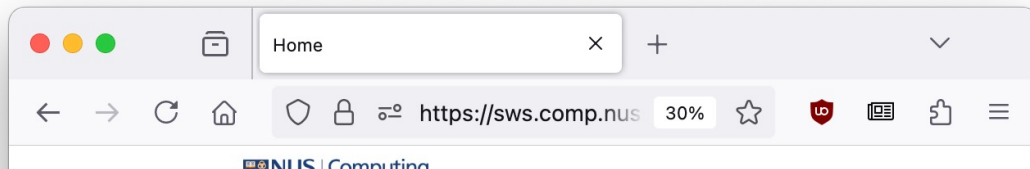
It is open to undergraduates from all across the world majoring in Computer Science, Information Systems and other related disciplines.

The workshop will explore some of today's most highly sought-after skills and knowledge in computing (e.g. Artificial Intelligence, Cloud Computing, Visual Computing, Robotics and Deep Learning, Game development, Analytics, Media and IoT). Through a blend of highly-interactive classes and projects, workshop participants will have an immersive learning experience, integrating theory into practice through hands-on application.

[Click to view promotional slides](#)



### Program Schedule



Problem is that if the web developer were to write the HTML as:

```
<p class="u-align-center u-text u-text-2">(.*?)</p>
```



### About

If there are additional spaces or different ordering for the CSS classes, the scraper will break

computing (e.g. Artificial Intelligence, Cloud Computing, Visual Computing, Robotics and Deep Learning, Game development, Analytics, Media and IoT). Through a blend of highly-interactive classes and projects, workshop participants will have an immersive learning experience, integrating theory into practice through hands-on application.

[Click to view promotional slides](#)



### Program Schedule

# FLAW OF STRING-BASED APPROACH OF WEB SCRAPING

**Too easily affected by the way how the HTML is written**

- Minor changes (e.g. newlines, spaces, capitalization, shifting of attributes ordering, etc) might break the scraper
- Even when the page is still a totally valid page and might look exactly the same

# RECAP: TECHNIQUES FOR WEB SCRAPING

The following are some of the techniques for doing web scraping:

- Extracting content from HTML source
- **Extracting content using a HTML parser**
- Web Scraping using APIs
- Scraping using an actual browser/headless browser

We will look at another approach which is more robust against this situation



# DOCUMENT OBJECT MODEL (DOM)



Document  
Object Model  
(DOM)

XPath

CSS  
Selectors

Extracting  
Content using  
HTML Parser

```

<html>
  <head>
    <meta charset="UTF-8" />
    <meta name="description" content="..." />
    <meta http-equiv="X-UA-Compatible" content="ie=edge" />
    <title>Welcome to SWS3023</title>
  </head>
  <body>
    <div class="article" id="a0042">
      <h1>Cupcake Article</h1>
      <div class="header">...</div>
      <p>...</p>
      <p>...</p>
    </div>
    <div class="article" id="a0043">
      <h1>Cheese Article</h1>
      <div class="header">...</div>
      <p>...</p>
      <p>...</p>
    </div>
    <div class="article special" id="b0051">
      <h1>Office Article</h1>
      <div class="snippet">...</div>
      <p>...</p>
      <p>...</p>
    </div>
  </body>
</html>

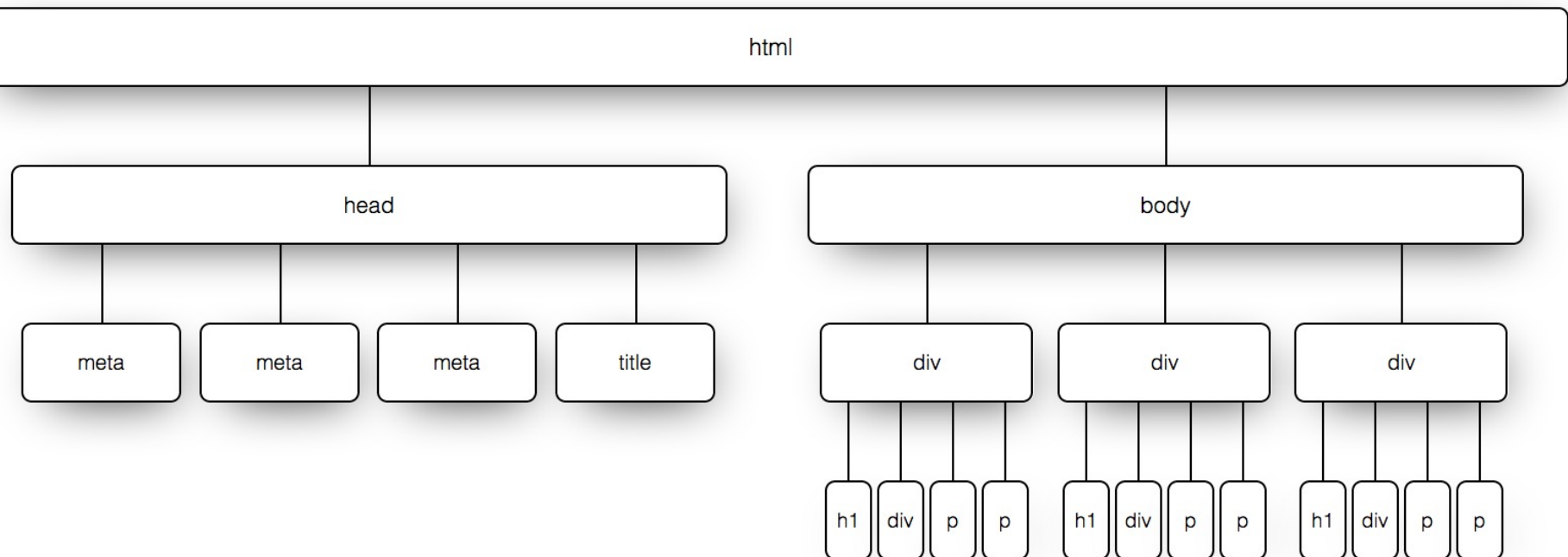
```

Recall: HTML defines  
the content and the  
layout of the page



# DOCUMENT OBJECT MODEL (DOM)

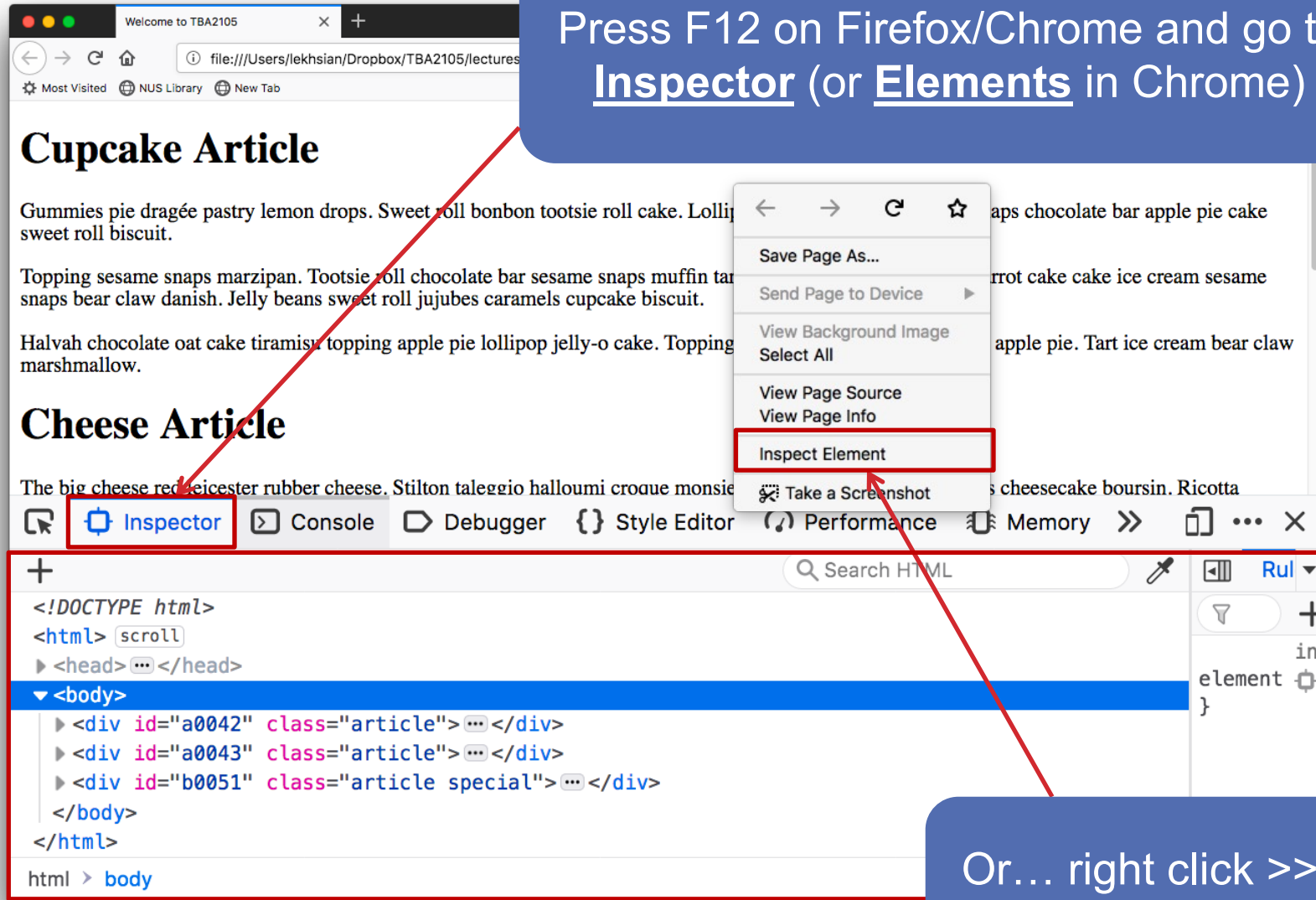
When the browser loads a page, it creates a **DOM** of the page and use it to render the page



DOM tree of page.html

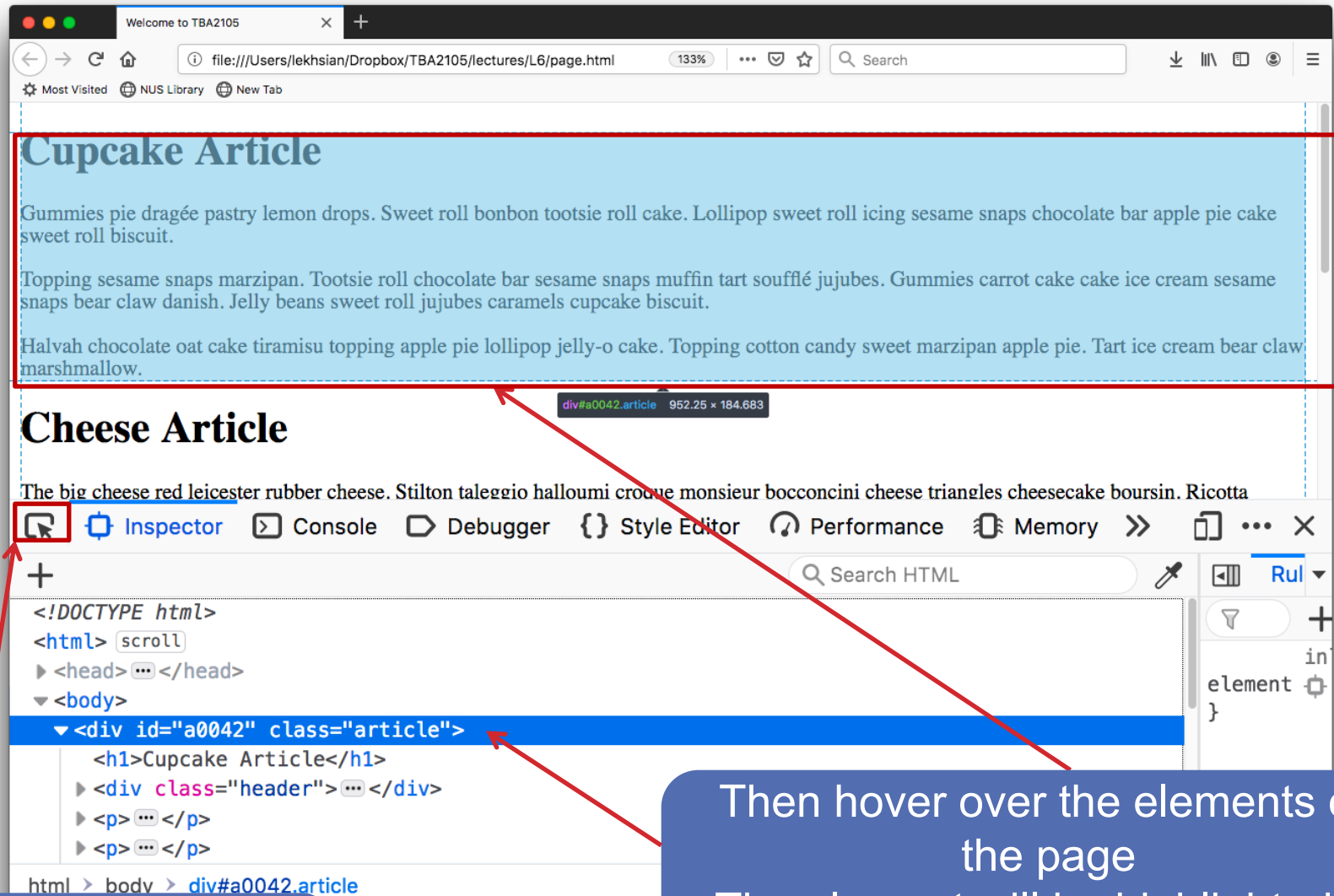
# VIEWING THE DOM ON WEB BROWSER

Press F12 on Firefox/Chrome and go to the Inspector (or Elements in Chrome) tab



Or... right click >>  
Inspect Element

# VIEWING THE DOM ON WEB BROWSER



First Choose the  
Pick Element Icon

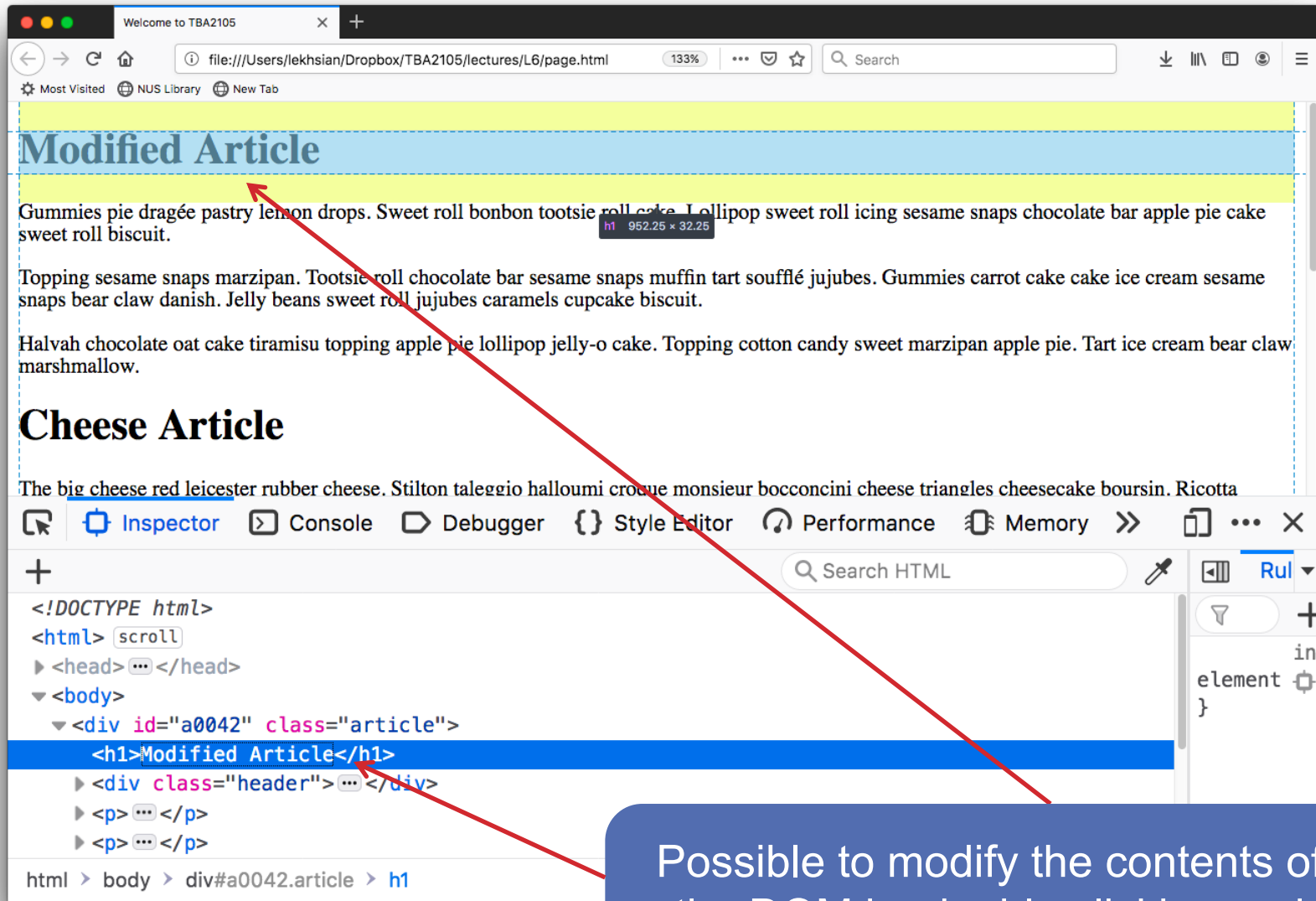
Then hover over the elements on  
the page  
The element will be highlighted at  
the Inspector tab

# VIEWING THE DOM ON WEB BROWSER



Alternatively, could just select an element at the Inspector tab, the selected element will be highlighted on the page

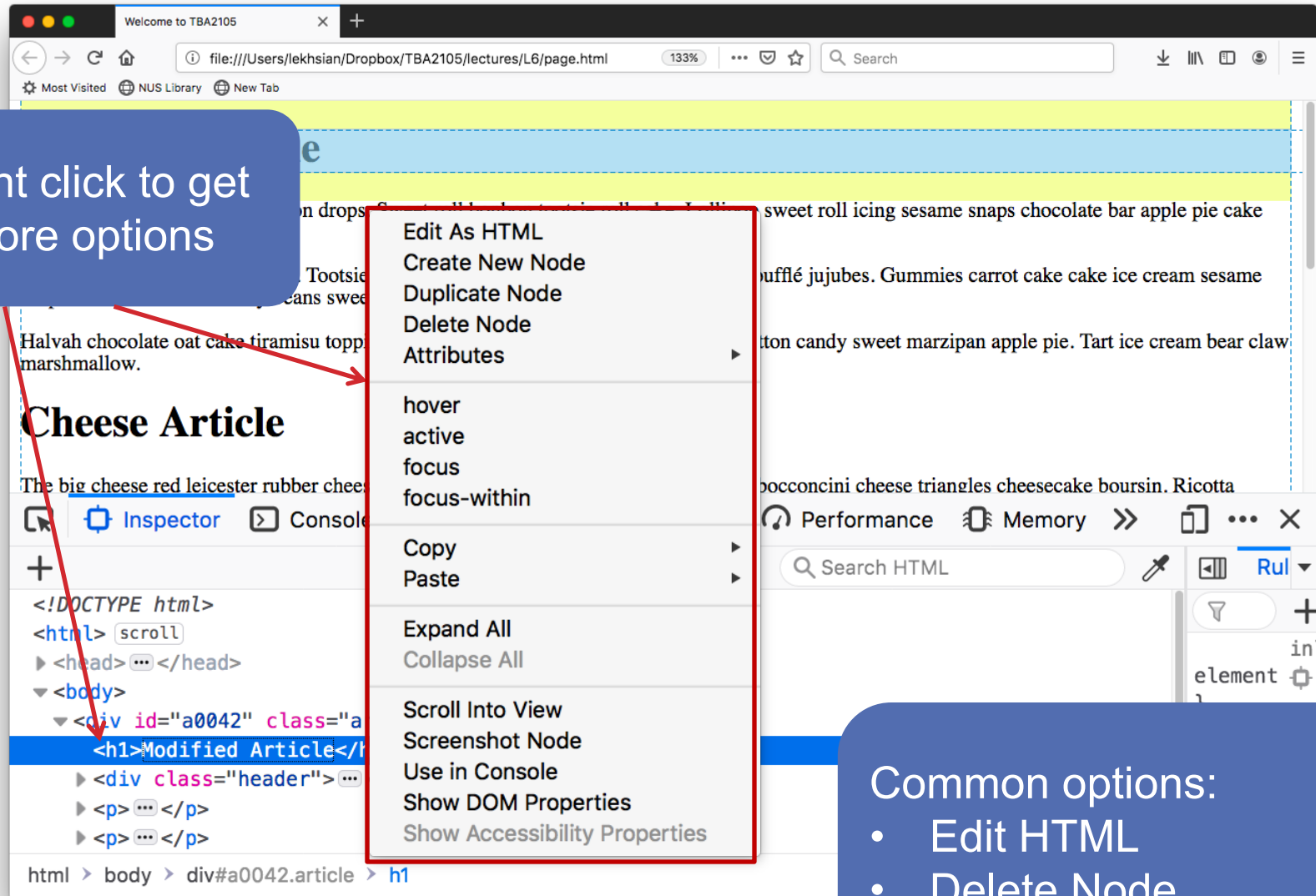
# MODIFYING THE DOM ON WEB BROWSER



Possible to modify the contents of the DOM by double clicking and editing

# MODIFYING THE DOM ON WEB BROWSER

Right click to get more options



Common options:

- Edit HTML
- Delete Node
- Copy (to be elaborated later)



# NAVIGATING THE DOM TREE

**Possible to navigate the DOM programmatically:**

- e.g. extract content, add/remove elements, etc

**2 ways to navigate the DOM tree**

- Using **XPath**
- Using **CSS Selectors**

# XPATH

Document  
Object Model  
(DOM)

XPath

CSS  
Selectors

Extracting  
Content using  
HTML Parser

# XPATH

**XPath** is a way to navigate through elements and attributes in an **eXtensible Markup Language (XML)** document

- HTML is very similar to a XML document
- Thus, XPath can be used to navigate through HTML documents also

# XPATH EXPRESSIONS

XPath Expression	Description
/html	Select the <b>html</b> node
/html/head	Select the <b>head</b> node (notice the navigation path)
/html/body/div	Select all the <b>div</b> <u>directly</u> under <b>body</b> node
/html/body/div[1]	Select the <u>first</u> <b>div</b> <u>directly</u> under <b>body</b> node
//div	Select all <b>div</b> in the document (regardless of its ancestor)
//div[1]	Select <u>all the first</u> <b>div</b> in the document (originating from an ancestor). Note that this can select <u>multiple div</u>
//div[last()]	Select <u>all the last</u> <b>div</b> in the document (originating from an ancestor). Note that this can select <u>multiple div</u>
//body/div	Select all the <b>div</b> nodes that is a <b>direct child</b> of the <b>body</b> node
//body//div	Select all the <b>div</b> nodes that is a <b>descendent</b> of the <b>body</b> node
//body/*	Select all the nodes under the <b>body</b> node (* is a wildcard)

# TRYING XPATH ON THE BROWSER

1. Select the Console tab

3. Result of the node selection is return as an array (hovering over a value will highlight the element on the page)

2. Type `$x (XPATH_EXPRESSION)` (this is effectively JavaScript)

**Modified Article**

Gummies pie dragée pastry lemon drops. Sweet roll bonbon tootsie roll cake. Lollipop sweet roll icing sesame snaps chocolate bar apple pie cake sweet roll biscuit.

Topping sesame snaps marzipan. Tootsie roll chocolate bar sesame snaps muffin tart soufflé jujubes. Gummies carrot cake cake ice cream sesame snaps bear claw danish. Jelly beans sweet roll jujubes caramels cupcake biscuit.

Halvah chocolate oat cake tiramisu topping apple pie lollipop marshmallow.

Choose Article

```
>> $x('/html')
< ▶ Array [ html ]
>> $x('/html/head')
< ▶ Array [ head ]
>> $x('/html/body')
< ▶ Array [ body ]
>>
```

# XPATH EXPRESSIONS

**Exercise:** Try out these expression using the browser Console

XPath Expression	Description
/html	Select the <b>html</b> node
/html/head	Select the <b>head</b> node (notice the navigation path)
/html/body/div	Select all the <b>div</b> <u>directly</u> under <b>body</b> node
/html/body/div[1]	Select the <u>first</u> <b>div</b> <u>directly</u> under <b>body</b> node
//div	Select all <b>div</b> in the document (regardless of its ancestor)
//div[1]	Select <u>all the first</u> <b>div</b> in the document (originating from an ancestor). Note that this can select <u>multiple div</u>
//div[last()]	Select <u>all the last</u> <b>div</b> in the document (originating from an ancestor). Note that this can select <u>multiple div</u>
//body/div	Select all the <b>div</b> nodes that is a <b>direct child</b> of the <b>body</b> node
//body//div	Select all the <b>div</b> nodes that is a <b>descendent</b> of the <b>body</b> node
//body//*	Select all the nodes under the <b>body</b> node (* is a wildcard)

# XPATH EXPRESSIONS

XPath Expression	Description
<code>//div[@id]</code>	Select all <b>div</b> node with <b>id</b> attribute
<code>//div[@class='article']</code>	Select all <b>div</b> node with <b>class</b> attribute with the value <b>article</b> (must be <b>exact match</b> , i.e. even with extra spaces will not work)
<code>//*[@class='article']</code>	Select <b>any</b> node with <b>class</b> attribute with the value <b>article</b>
<code>//div[starts-with(@id, 'a004')]</code>	Select all <b>div</b> node with <b>id</b> attribute having value starting with <b>a004</b>
<code>//div[contains(@id, '00')]</code>	Select all <b>div</b> node with <b>id</b> attribute having value containing <b>00</b>
<code>//*[contains(@class, 'article')]/..</code>	Select <b>parent</b> node of <b>any</b> node with <b>class</b> attribute having value containing <b>article</b>
<code>//div   //p</code>	Select all <b>div</b> and <b>p</b> nodes

# CASE SENSITIVITY

XPath Expression	Case Sensitive?
<code>//div[@id]</code> <code>//DIV[@id]</code> <code>//div[@ID]</code> <code>//DiV[@ID]</code>	All these are equivalent. Both the node name and the attribute names are <b>not case sensitive</b>
<code>//div[@class='article']</code> <code>//div[@class='Article']</code>	These are not equivalent. The attribute value is <b>case sensitive</b>  Same principle applies to <code>starts-with()</code> and <code>contains()</code>



# XPATH REFERENCES

[https://www.w3schools.com/xml/xpath\\_syntax.asp](https://www.w3schools.com/xml/xpath_syntax.asp)

# CSS SELECTORS



# CSS SELECTORS

**CSS selectors** is another way to select elements in HTML

- Used mainly for selecting HTML elements in order to apply styling into the webpage
- But could also be used for referencing to elements in JavaScript or for doing web scraping
- More commonly used compared to XPath
- Tends to be shorter compared to XPath

# CSS SELECTORS

**CSS selectors** is another way to select elements in HTML

- ...
- For the purpose of web scraping, these are the most useful type of selectors
  - **Element** selector
  - **Class** selector
  - **Id** selector
  - **Attribute** selector
  - **Pseudo-Classes** selector
  - **Relationship** selector

# ELEMENT, CLASS, ID SELECTOR

**Element selector** used to select all elements with a certain type of tag

**Id selector** used to select the element with a certain id value

- HTML usually use `id` to uniquely identify an element

**Class selector** used to select the element with a certain class attribute value

- HTML elements usually use `class` to denote the style of the element

# TRYING CSS SELECTORS

To use css selector, type  
\$\$ (CSS\_SELECTOR)

## Element selector:

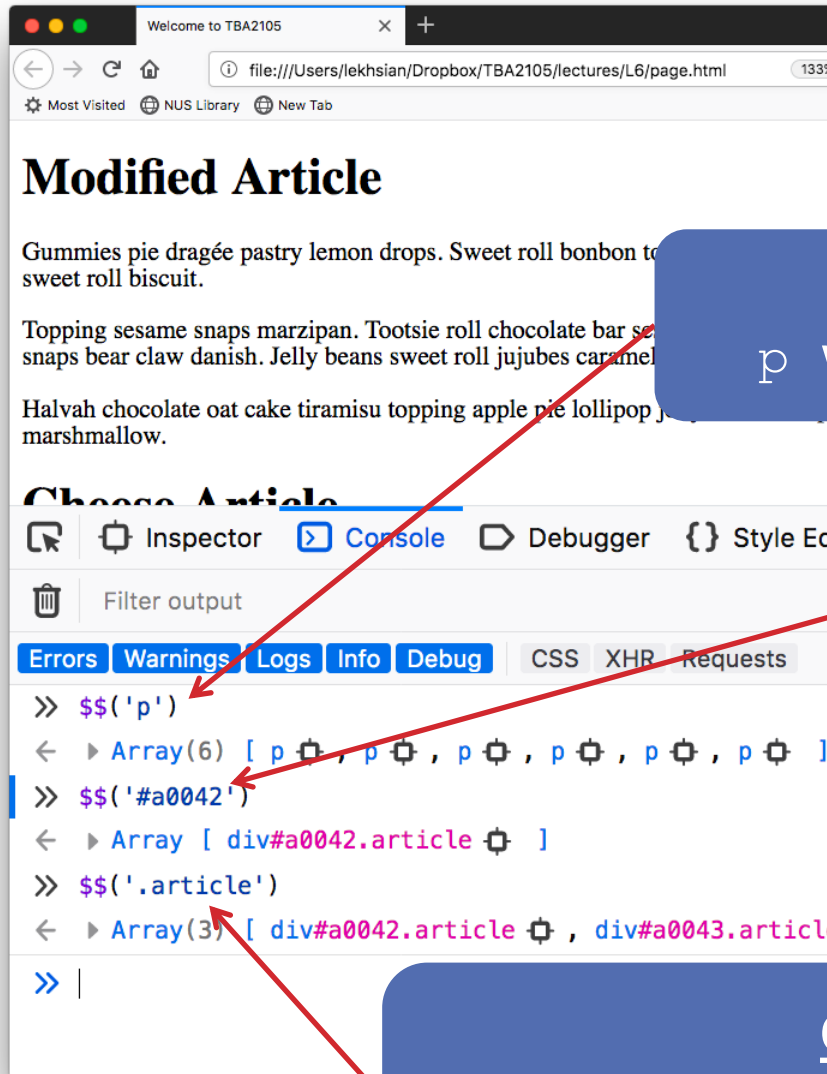
p will select all paragraph elements

## Id selector:

#a0042 will select the element  
with id = a0042

## Class selector:

.article will select the elements with class  
containing article class



# CSS SELECTORS

Possible to have multiple type of selectors

CSS Selector	Description
<code>div#a0042</code>	This selects the <b>div</b> node with <b>id = a0042</b>
<code>div.article</code>	This selects all the <b>div</b> nodes with <b>class</b> <u>containing article</u> (need not be an exact match, the element can have multiple class values separated by spaces)
<code>.article#a0042</code>	This selects all nodes with <b>class</b> <u>containing article</u> and with <b>id = a0042</b>
<code>.article.special</code>	This selects all nodes with <b>class</b> containing both <b>article</b> and <b>special</b> (can be any ordering but be careful that <u>no spaces between the 2 classes</u> )
<code>div,p</code> <code>div , p</code> <code>div, p</code>	This selects all the <b>div</b> and <b>p</b> nodes

# ATTRIBUTE SELECTORS

CSS Selector	Description
<code>meta[name]</code>	This selects the <b>meta</b> node with a <b>name</b> attribute
<code>meta[name='description']</code>	This selects the <b>meta</b> node with a <b>name</b> attribute with the value <b>description</b> (exact match)
<code>meta[content~='page']</code>	This selects the <b>meta</b> node with a <b>content</b> attribute containing a <b>page</b> as a <u>whole word match</u> . Would not match somepage.
<code>meta[content*='learn']</code>	This selects the <b>meta</b> node with a <b>content</b> attribute containing <b>learn</b> . Matches as long as there is a <b>substring</b> of learn.
<code>[class = 'article']</code> <code>*[class = 'article']</code>	This selects all node with <b>class</b> attribute that is <b>article</b> (exact match)
<code>[id ^= 'a00']</code>	This selects all node with <b>id</b> attribute that <u>starts with</u> <b>a00</b>
<code>[id \$= '51']</code>	This selects all node with <b>id</b> attribute that <u>ends with</u> <b>a00</b>



# PSEUDO-CLASSES SELECTORS

CSS Selector	Description
<code>div:first-child</code>	This selects all <b>div</b> nodes that is the <u>1<sup>st</sup> child of its parent</u>
<code>p:last-child</code>	This selects all <b>p</b> nodes that is the <u>last child of its parent</u>
<code>p:nth-child(3)</code>	This selects all <b>p</b> nodes that is the <u>3<sup>rd</sup> node of its parent</u>

# RELATIONSHIP SELECTORS

CSS Selector	Description
<code>body div</code>	This selects all <b>div</b> nodes that are <u>descendents</u> of <b>body</b>
<code>body &gt; div</code>	This selects all <b>div</b> nodes that are <u>direct child</u> of <b>body</b>
<code>h1 + *</code>	This selects all nodes that is a <u>next sibling</u> of <b>h1</b>
<code>.article .snippet</code>	This will find all nodes having <b>class</b> containing <b>article</b> , and select all <u>descendent</u> nodes having <b>class</b> containing <b>snippet</b> . Notice that there is a <u>space separating the 2 classes</u>

Can mix with the other  
selectors discussed before

# CASE SENSITIVITY

CSS Selector	Case Sensitive?
DIV Div DiV	These are equivalent. Tag names are <b>not case sensitive</b>
.article .Article	These are not equivalent. Classes are <b>case sensitive</b>
#a0042 #A0042	Likewise, these are not equivalent. Ids are <b>case sensitive</b>
meta[name] meta[Name]	These are equivalent. The attribute names are <b>not case sensitive</b>
meta[name='description'] meta[name='Description']	These are not equivalent. Attribute values are <b>case sensitive</b> (as principles as class and id)

# CSS SELECTOR REFERENCES

[https://www.w3schools.com/cssref/css\\_selectors.asp](https://www.w3schools.com/cssref/css_selectors.asp)

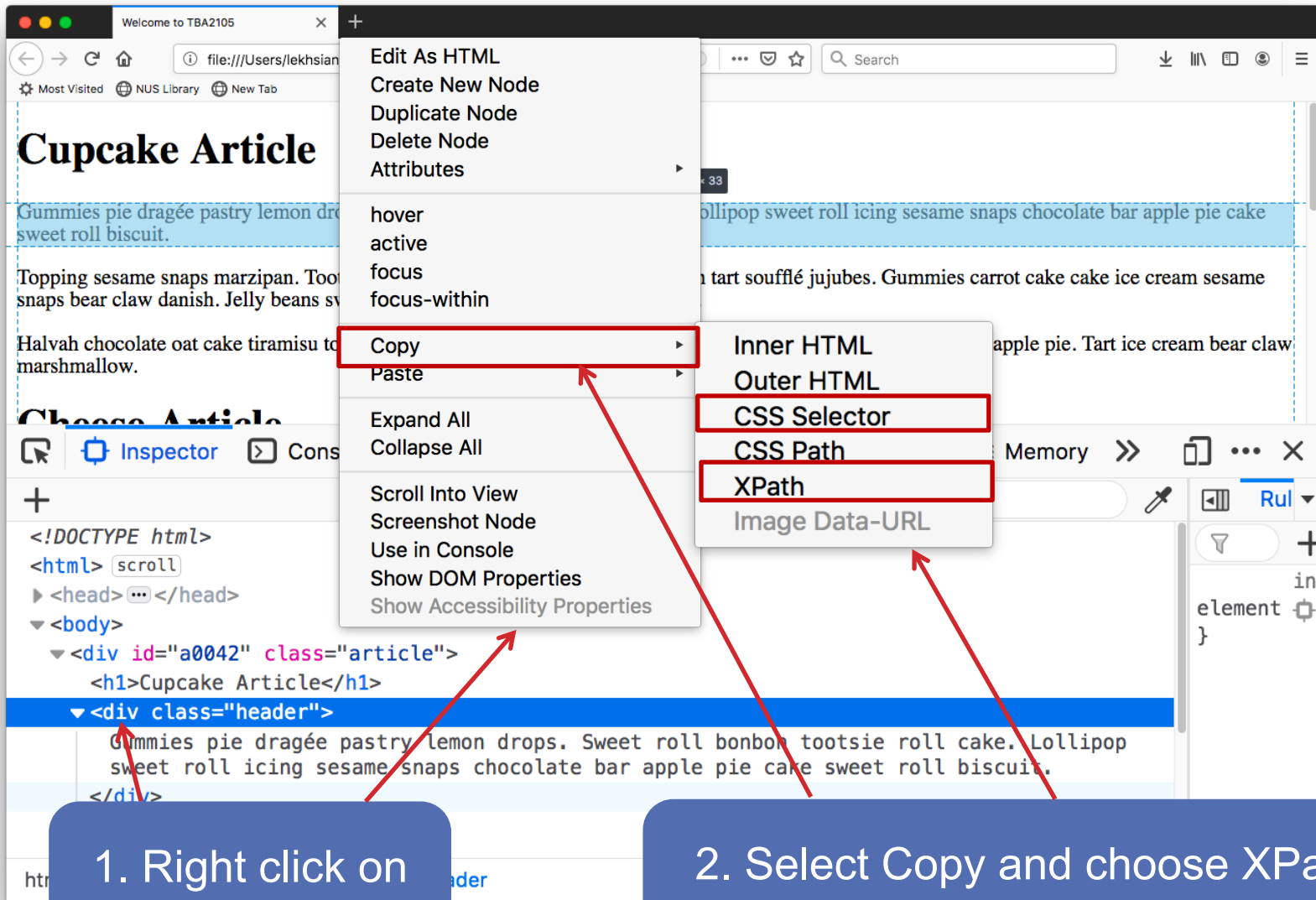
**XPath vs CSS Selectors:**

<https://johnresig.com/blog/xpath-css-selectors/>

**Not confident of writing your own XPath/CSS Selectors?**

- The browser also allows you to copy the XPath/CSS Selector expressions

# COPY XPATH/CSS SELECTOR

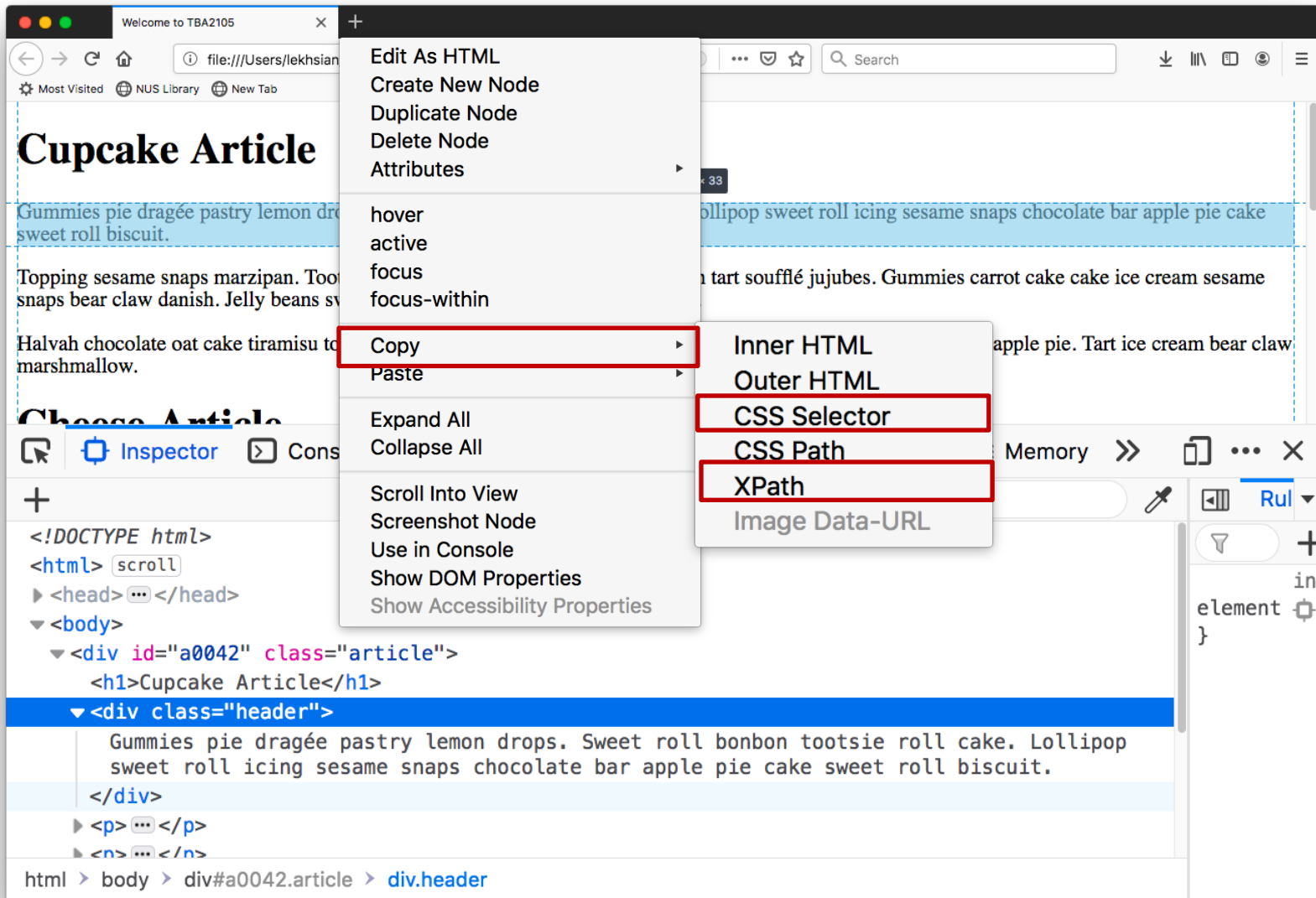


1. Right click on  
an element

2. Select Copy and choose XPath or  
CSS Selector (or Selector for chrome)

# COPY XPA

Note that these expressions tend to be very long and overly specific (still better to write manually)



# EXTRACTING CONTENT USING HTML PARSER

Document  
Object Model  
(DOM)

XPath

CSS  
Selectors

Extracting  
Content using  
HTML Parser

# HTML PARSING

Different programming platform has its own library for doing **HTML parsing**

- After parsing, we are able to select the HTML elements using XPath and/or CSS selectors
- Can use the **lxml** (for XPath) and **BeautifulSoup** packages


**Idea:**

- Parse the HTML document
- Use XPath/CSS Selector to select the element(s)
- Extract the value (attribute/text/html) of the element(s)



# HANDS-ON: WEB SCRAPING

Download and access:  
[Webscrapping using HTML parsing.ipynb](#)

```
jupyter Webscrapping using HTML parsing (autosaved)  Logout

File Edit View Insert Cell Kernel Widgets Help Trusted Python 3

[Icons] Run [Icons] Markdown

XPath approach

In [1]: from lxml import html
import requests

page = requests.get("https://www.comp.nus.edu.sg/~lekhsian/sws3023/page.html")
page.content

Out[1]: b'<!DOCTYPE html>\n<html>\n  <head>\n    <meta charset="UTF-8" />\n    <meta\n      name="description"\n      content="This is a dummy page for learning selectors"\n    />\n    <meta\n      http-equiv="X-UA-Compatible" content="ie=edge" />\n    <title>Welcome to TBA2105</title>\n  </head>\n  <body>\n    <p>this is a paragraph outside any div</p>\n    <div class="article"\n      id="a0042">\n      <h1>Cupcake Article</h1>\n      <div class="header">\n        Gummies pi\n        e drag\&#x3\&#xa9e pastry lemon drops. Sweet roll bonbon tootsie roll\n          cake. Lollipop\n        sweet roll icing sesame snaps chocolate bar apple pie\n          cake sweet roll biscuit.\n      </div>\n      <div>this is a third level div</div>\n    </div>\n    <p>\n      Topping sesame snaps\n      marzipan. Tootsie roll chocolate bar sesame snaps\n        muffin tart souffl\&#x3\&#xa9 jujub\n        es. Gummies carrot cake cake ice cream sesame\n          snaps bear claw danish. Jelly beans\n        sweet roll jujubes caramels cupcake\n          biscuit.\n      </p>\n    </div>\n    <div class="article" id="a0043">\n      <h1>Cheese Article</h1>\n      <div class="header">\n        The big cheese red leicester rubber cheese. Stilton taleggio\n        halloumi\n        croque monsieur bocconcini cheese triangles cheesecake boursin. Ricotta\n        parmesan cheese slices emmental airedale manchego babybel\n          Emmental cheese
```

# **SUMMARY**

## **Document Object Model (DOM)**

### **Navigating the DOM tree**

- XPath and CSS Selectors

### **Extracting Content using HTML Parser**

- lxml & BeautifulSoup packages

# WHAT'S NEXT?

## Mining Web Content III