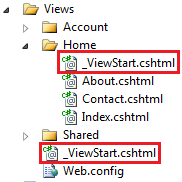
In this video, we will discuss the advantage of using **\_ViewStart.cshtml**. Please watch [Part 59](http://csharp-video-tutorials.blogspot.com/2013/07/part-59-layout-view-in-mvc.html), before proceeding.

In [Part 59](http://csharp-video-tutorials.blogspot.com/2013/07/part-59-layout-view-in-mvc.html), we discussed that, to associate a view with a layout file, we have to set Layout property on each and every view. This violates **DRY**(Don't Repeat Yourself) principle, and has the following disadvantages  
**1.** Redundant code.  
**2.** Maintenance overhead. To use a different layout file, all the views need to be updated.

**What is \_ViewStart.cshtml file?**  
ASP.NET MVC 3, has introduced \_ViewStart.cshtml. Specify the Layout property in this file and place it in the Views folder. All the views will then use the layout file that is specified in \_ViewStart.cshtml. This eliminates the need to specify Layout property on each and every view, and making them more cleaner and maintainable.  
   
  
If you want a set of views in a specific folder, to use a different layout file, then you can include another \_ViewStart.cshtml file in that specific folder.   
  
**When I use \_ViewStart.cshtml file, can I still set Layout property on individual views?**  
Yes, if you want to use a layout file that is different from what is specified in \_ViewStart.cshtml  
  
**Where else can I specify a layout file?**  
Layout file can also be specified in a controller action method or in an action filter.  
  
**In Controller Action Method:**  
Specify which layout to use  when returning a view inside a controller action  
public ActionResult Create()  
{  
    return View("Create", "\_Layout");  
}  
  
We will discuss action filters in a later video session.  
  
**Can we write some logic in "\_ViewStart.cshtml" to dynamically specify which layout file to use?**

Yes, the following code will change the layout file to use based on the browser type.   
If the browser is google chrome,   
    then "\_Layout.cshtml" layout file is used  
Else  
    "\_DifferentLayout.cshtml" layout file is used  
  
**Code in "\_ViewStart.cshtml" file**  
@{  
    Layout = Request.Browser.IsBrowser("Chrome") ? "~/Views/Shared/\_Layout.cshtml" : "~/Views/Shared/\_DifferentLayout.cshtml" ;  
}  
  
**All partial views in my application are now using the layout file specified in "\_ViewStart.cshtml". How do I prevent these partial views from using a layout file?**  
Details action method below, returns "\_Employee" partial view, and is using the layout file specified in "\_ViewStart.cshtml"  
public ActionResult Details(int id)  
{  
    Employee employee = db.Employees.Single(e => e.Id == id);  
    return View("\_Employee", employee);  
}  
  
To prevent this partial view from using the layout file, specified in **"\_ViewStart.cshtml"**, return **"PartialViewResult"** from the controller action method as shown below.  
public PartialViewResult Details(int id)  
{  
    Employee employee = db.Employees.Single(e => e.Id == id);  
    return PartialView("\_Employee", employee);  
}  
  
**What will be the layout file extension, if VB.NET is my programming language?**  
.vbhtml  
  
In our next video, we will discuss using **named sections in a layout file**.