

Theory: Text Alignment

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One of the quickest ways to change the look of a web page is to align the text that's on it. Alignment determines the position of the edges of the paragraph relative to the vertical sides of the page. To position a paragraph to the left or right, along the center of the page or over the width there is a text-align property in CSS. It describes how the content on the line will be aligned on the page. Let's take a look at how to set the alignment for text using the following values: `left`, `right`, `center`, `justify`, `start`, `end`.

§1. text-align: left / right

```
1 | text-align: left;
```

The `left` value aligns the text to the left of the page and the right side of the text is left dangling as shown in the picture below:

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur adipisicing elit. Aliquam, similique quidem corrupti quis nam ad sint necessitatibus saepe maiores dolorum reprehenderit repudiandae odit eaque aperiam error provident perspiciatis consequuntur repellendus ullam iure labore. Aut porro odit quos at optio beatae!

With this alignment method, the text is easy to read, since it is aligned in the same direction as reading (for LTR - left-to-right languages), and it is also easier to find the beginning of a new line. The value `left` is used by default, so there's no need to specify it too much.

```
1 | text-align: right;
```

The `right` value aligns the text to the right border of the parent block and, as in the example with the `left` value, a one part is rugged, but in this case to the left.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur adipisicing elit. Aliquam, similique quidem corrupti quis nam ad sint necessitatibus saepe maiores dolorum reprehenderit repudiandae odit eaque aperiam error provident perspiciatis consequuntur repellendus ullam iure labore. Aut porro odit quos at optio beatae!

For some languages, the default value is set to right (e.g. Arabic, Hebrew).

§2. text-align: center / justify

```
1 | text-align: center;
```

The `center` value is used to align the text to the center of the parent block. Lines with equal indents on the sides are shifted to the middle so we can see a `ladder` forming on the left and right.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur adipisicing elit. Aliquam, similique quidem corrupti quis nam ad sint necessitatibus saepe maiores dolorum reprehenderit repudiandae odit eaque aperiam error provident perspiciatis consequuntur repellendus ullam iure labore. Aut porro odit quos at optio beatae!

It is used quite often when designing headings or signatures.

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Below will be a puppy



who is a good boy?

```
1 | text-align: justify;
```

The one is the `justify` value, or justification. The text spans the entire width of the parent block's area, which simultaneously aligns the edges of the lines to the left and right sides of the parent box.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur adipisicing elit. Aliquam, similique quidem corrupti quis nam ad sint necessitatibus saepe maiores dolorum reprehenderit repudiandae odit eaque aperiam error provident perspiciatis consequuntur repellendus ullam iure labore. Aut porro odit quos at optio beatae!

Be careful! When aligning a sentence in width, the spaces between words grow, while with words wrapped at the border of the block, this contributes to excessive line stretching, which increases spaces in narrow columns! Therefore, below we can see the text with huge spaces, which does not look pretty.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet
consectetur adipisicing elit.
Quod, pariatur cupiditate
commodi nulla facilis, minima
necessitatibus ab repellendus
eos reprehenderit soluta
laborum corporis voluptate
rem autem magnam deserunt
sequi quia.

This alignment is mainly used when styling text for a book (newspaper or magazine) on sites for online reading, as well as for designing the articles.

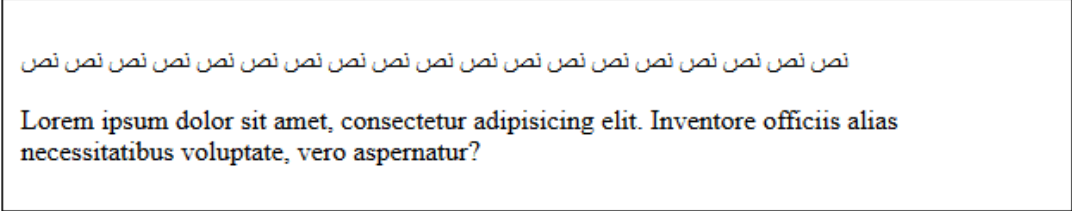
§3. text-align: start / end

```
1 | text-align: start;  
2 | text-align: end;
```

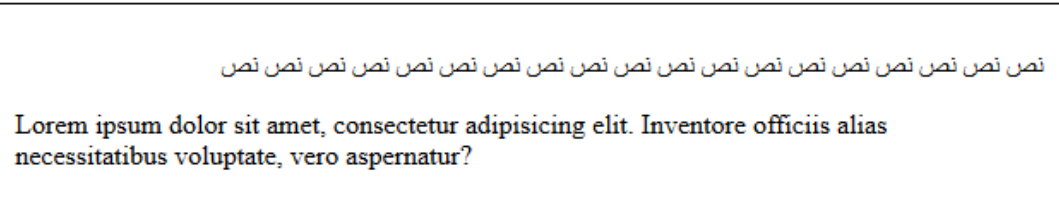
By purpose, `start` and `end` are very similar to the `left` and `right` values. `Start` has the same effect as `left` if the reading direction of the text in LTR language is left-to-right and similarly to `right` when the direction of the RTL text is right-to-left. Conversely, `end` works like `right` if the text is LTR and like `left` if the direction of the text is RTL.

These values are needed so that the text has the preferable alignment for the browser's language settings and it is more convenient for the user, say, to read Arabic or Hebrew pressed to the right side.

A small example. There are two lines where one is RTL and the other is LTR. If we specify the property `text-align: left;` on both lines, then both lines will be aligned to the left.



For some users who speak arabic, such a text will be unusual to read. However, if you set `start` instead of `left`, then the offset will be set to the side depending on the direction of the text.



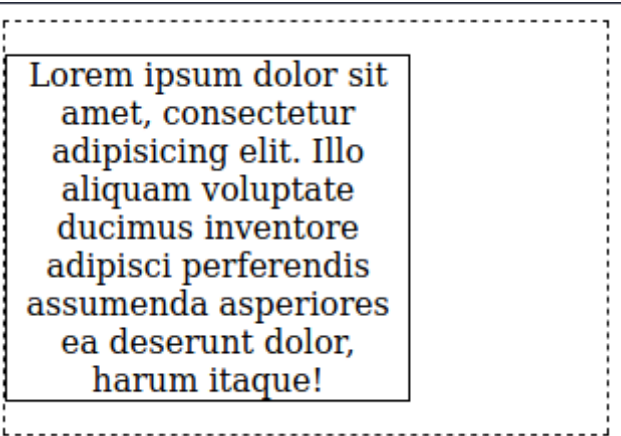
§4. Note

The `text-align` property does not move the whole element with the text, but only the text itself, so it is not suitable for aligning blocks. It will not be possible to position the `<p>` element in the center of its parent block using `text-align`. Let's take a look at a small example. The markup below has a parent `<div class="parent">` with one child `<p class="child">`.

```
1 <div class="parent">
2   <p class="child">
3     Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit.
4
5     Illo aliquam voluptate ducimus inventore adipisci perferendis assumenda
6     asperiores ea deserunt dolor, harum itaque!
7   </p>
8 </div>
```

In CSS, we will specify the minimum properties for separating elements visually, outline the parent with a dot-and-dash line and the child with a continuous stripe. Let's make the `.child` element 100px smaller than its parent and apply the `text-align: center` property.

```
1 .parent {
2   width: 300px;
3   border: 1px dashed black;
4 }
5 .child {
6   width: 200px;
7   text-align: center;
8   border: 1px solid black;
9 }
```



Note that despite the fact that we've specified the center alignment, the text box itself has not moved, but the content inside the box is now centered. From this we can conclude that the property affects only the text content of elements, but not the elements themselves.

\$5. Conclusion

The `text-align` property lets you add beauty to your test web page. It also helps you to align all text to make the contents of the site more readable for the visitors. Place text in the middle of a line or evenly stretch words across its entire width.

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