Real World Use Cases

We've run all our code examples within the confines of the interactive platform here on educative.io. There are certain things to note when writing CSS in real life. Here they are.

One Style, Many Ways

In the real world i.e outside this interactive platform, I don't want you confused. So how would you define styles in CSS?

There are 3 ways to do this, and I will explain them with good examples.

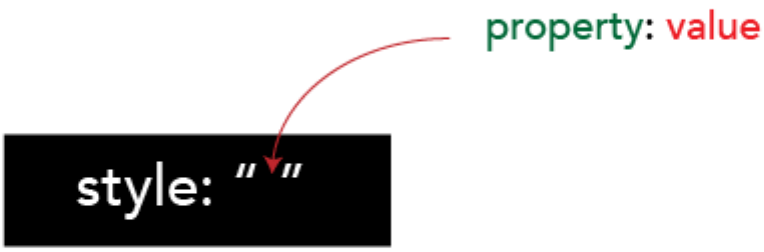
1.Inline Styles

Inline styles are the easiest way to style a document. But they come with a cost. Consider the basic markup below:

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html lang="en">
<head>
<meta charset="utf-8" />
<title>A Simple Page</title>
</head>
<body>
<h1>My CSS</h1>
<p>A paragraph of interesting content on how I learned CSS.</p>
</body>
</html>
```

To style the `h1` element , you may use the `style` attribute. Like this:

```
<h1 style="color: red" >My CSS</h1>
```



This will give the `h1` a color of red. While this may look as an easy alternative. it is very hard to maintain.

Assume you had a really long document with over 20 paragraphs styled with the `style` attribute. How do you manage multiple changes to the paragraphs?

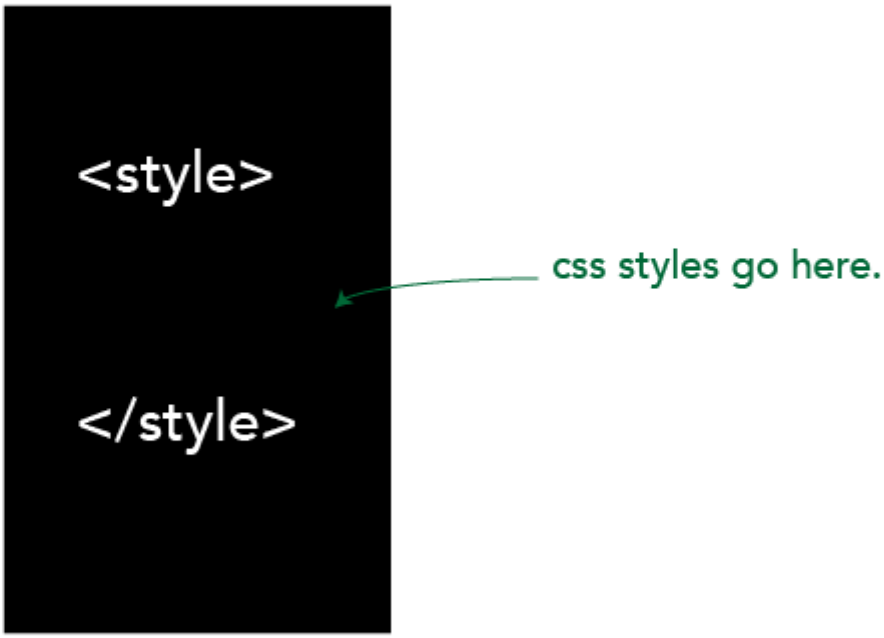
You'd have to go through all the paragraphs painfully and edit them with in the `html` markup.

Also, inline styles are not resusable. Inline styles just target the parent element. In this case, the particular `h1` tag. If you want to style another `h1` tag, you'll have to rewrite the style!

Very painful process indeed.

2.Embedded Styles

The second way to style a document is to use the `style` tag. Within this tag, you may write all the CSS you want. Use `classes`, `selectors`, any valid CSS.



Let’s get back to the initial example:

Style the `h1` element like this:

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html lang="en">
<head>
<meta charset="utf-8" />
<title>A Simple Page</title>
<style>
    h1 {
        color: red
    }
</style>
</head>
<body>
<h1>My CSS</h1>
<p>A paragraph of interesting content on how I learned CSS.</p>
</body>
</html>
```

What to Note is this:

The `style` tag must be within the `head` of the document.

This looks good, huh?

There's also one problem with this approach.

If you have 3 different `html` documents e.g. `about.html`, `index.html` and `main.html` you cannot resue the style declarations from one document to another.

You'd have to copy the same styles and have them within the head of each single page. That isn't very cool.

What if we could write the styles in one `styles.css` document and reuse it accross all pages?

That is exactly what we will do next.

3. External Stylesheet

You remember most of the problems with the other methods of styling a document? An external stylesheet solves most, if not all of these problems.

An external stylesheet is usually a file with a `.css` extension. e.g `style.css`, `example.css` , `anything.css`. You get the idea.

After creating this file, you then link to it from your `html` file.

Aaargh, you didnt get that?

Let's see an example.

Assume we have two different files. One, an `index.html` file and the other, a `style.css` file.

As expected the `html` markup of the site lives in the `index.html` file.

We will also write all the css for the website in the `style.css` file.

If the `index.html` file contained the markup shown below:

```
 <!DOCTYPE html>
<html lang="en">
<head>
```

```
<meta charset="utf-8" />
<title>A Simple Page</title>
<style>

    h1 {
        color: red
    }
</style>
</head>
<body>
<h1>My CSS</h1>
<p>A paragraph of interesting content on how I learned CSS.</p>
</body>
</html>
```

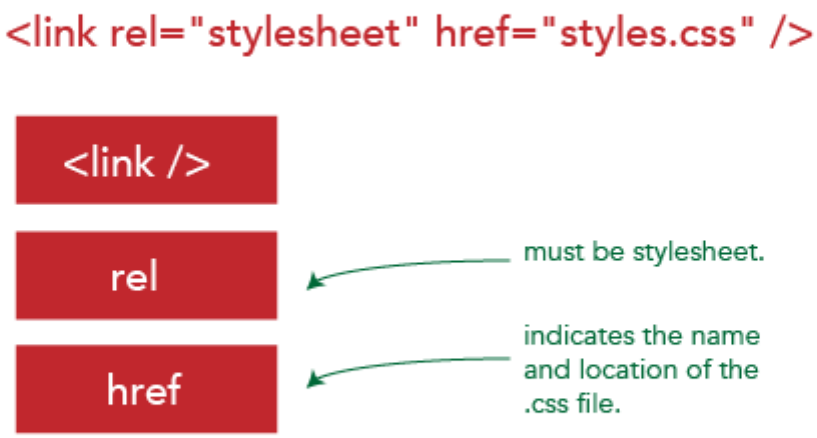
We can safely remove the embedded style from line 6 to 10 and have it in the `style.css` file (without the `<style>` tags, that is).

Then, the `style.css` file will be linked within the `head` of the `index.html` file like this:

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html lang="en">
<head>
<meta charset="utf-8" />
<title>A Simple Page</title>
<link rel="stylesheet" href="styles.css" />
</head>
<body>
<h1>My CSS</h1>
<p>A paragraph of interesting content on how I learned CSS.</p>
</body>
</html>
```

So, there are three major components.

1. The self closing `link` tag
2. The rel attribute, which must be set to `stylesheet`
3. The href attribute, which defines the name and location of the `.css` file.



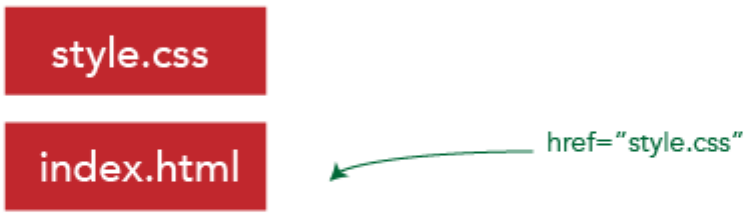
> NB: You'll find some codebase using `type="text/css"` i.e `<link rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" href="styles.css" />`.

This is NOT required, as we are using `html5`. Thus, don't sweat it.

The href attribute.

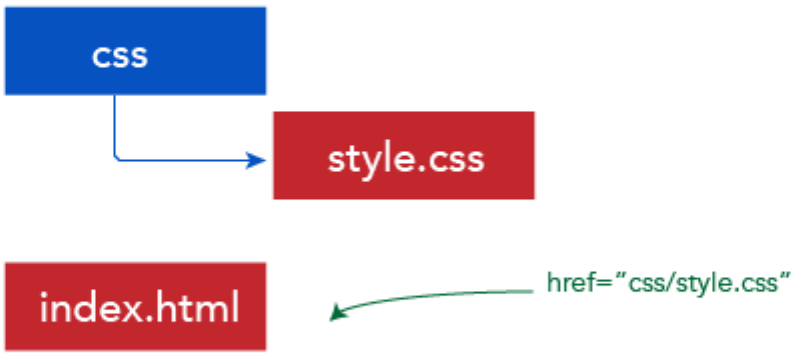
The href attribute, like I said earlier, defines the name and location of the `.css` file.

If the `index.html` and `style.css` are in the same folder then the `href` attribute will be this: `href="styles.css"`



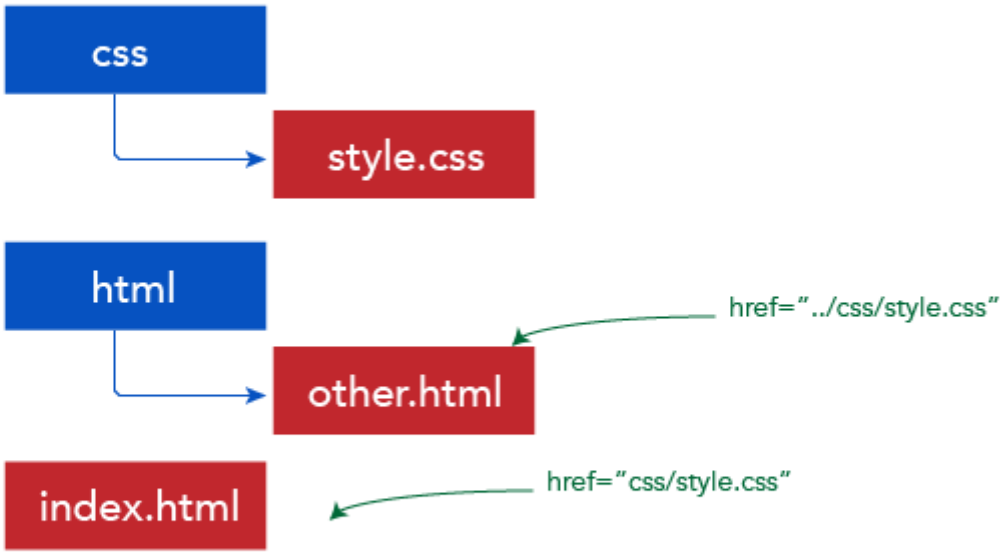
Ideally, you may want to follow a rather structured approach and put the `style.css` file in a `style` folder.

In this case, the `href` atribute will be this: `href='css/style.css'` where `css` is the name of the folder where `style.css` lives.



It is very likely that you have multiple `html` pages. e.g `about.html` may contain the about us information of the site. `faq.html` may contains information on faqs.

How do you link the styles in this case?



with a folder structure as shown in the image above, the `href` attribute will be this: `href='../css/style.css'` The `../` means "go up one directory" and find the `css` folder, then get the `style.css` file.

Conclusion

This was a pretty long one.

Enjoyed it?

Let's move on to the final bits of the course.