

CSS Class and ID tags

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Classes

You may be wondering if it is possible to give an HTML element multiple looks with CSS. Say for example, sometimes you want the font to be large and white, while other times you would prefer the font to be small and black. CSS would not be very useful if it did not allow you to have many different types of formats for a single HTML tag. You are in luck! CSS allows you to do just that with the use of classes.

Using classes is simple. You just need to add an extension to the typical CSS code and make sure you specify this extension in your HTML. Let's try this with an example of making two paragraphs that behave differently. First, we begin with the CSS code, note the red text.

CSS Code:

```
p.first{ color: blue; }  
p.second{ color: red; }
```

HTML Code:

```
<html>  
<body>  
<p>This is a normal paragraph.</p>  
  
<p class="first">This is a paragraph that uses the p.first  
CSS code!</p>  
<p class="second">This is a paragraph that uses the  
p.second CSS code!</p>  
...
```

Display:

This is a normal paragraph.

This is a paragraph that uses the p.first CSS code!

This is a paragraph that uses the p.second CSS code!

You can use CSS Classes with any HTML element! However, what happens if we had already defined a value for the base <p> tag? Well, what happens is the HTML element first takes on the style defined by the base and **then** the styles defined by the class. If the CSS class uses a CSS attribute already defined by the base CSS then the formatting defined by the class will be the value that is used.

It may be easier to imagine that the base CSS code is the starting look that all HTML elements will have and the only way to change that look is to overwrite the attributes using CSS classes. Please see the example below for a visual of this tricky topic.

CSS Code:

```
p{ color: red; font-size: 16px; }
p.test1{ color: blue; }
p.test2{ font-size: 12px; }
```

HTML Code:

```
<html>
<body>
<p>This is a normal paragraph.</p>
<p class="test1">This is a paragraph that uses the p.test1
CSS code!</p>
<p class="test2">This is a paragraph that uses the p.test2
CSS code!</p>
...
```

Display:

This is a normal paragraph.

This is a paragraph that uses the p.test1 CSS code!
The p.test1 paragraph remained the same size, but
it's color changed.

This is a paragraph that uses the p.test2 CSS code! The p.test2
paragraph remained the same color, but it's size changed.

Remember, CSS code in classes will override the general CSS code.
p.test1 overrides **p**!

CSS Classes vs ID

There is often confusion when it is appropriate to use CSS IDs and when CSS Classes should be used instead. This lesson is geared to display an answer as well as provide more information about CSS IDs

What is an ID Selector?

The W3C defines class ID as "a unique identifier to an element". But what does that actually mean? Hopefully you have already read our CSS Classes lesson before continuing, if not, we recommend doing so.

CSS IDs are similar to classes in that they define a special case for an element. In other words, they assign an identifier. Below is an example of a CSS ID.

CSS Code:

```
p#exampleID1 { background-color: white; }  
p#exampleID2 { text-transform: uppercase; }
```

HTML Code:

```
<p id="ExampleID1">This paragraph has an ID name of  
"exampleID1" and has a white CSS defined background</p>
```

```
<p id="ExampleID2">This paragraph has an ID name of  
"exampleID2" and has had its text transformed to uppercase  
letters. </p>
```

Display:

This paragraph has an ID name of "exampleID1" and has a white CSS defined background.

This paragraph has an ID name of "exampleID2" and has had its text transformed to uppercase letters.

Notice that an ID's CSS is an HTML element, followed by a "#", and finally ID's name - "element#idname". Also, be sure to absorb the fact that when an id is used in HTML we must use "id=name" instead of "class=name" to reference it!

Why Did They Choose Those Names??

- ID = A person's Identification (ID) is **unique** to one person.
- Class = There are **many** people in a class.

ID for Layout and Uniqueness

Standards specify that any given id name can only be referenced once within a page or document. From our experience, IDs are most commonly used correctly in CSS layouts. This makes sense because there are usually only one menu per page, one banner, and usually only one content pane.

In Tizag.com CSS Layout Examples we have used used IDs for the unique items mentioned above. View the CSS Code for our first layout example. Below are the unique IDs in our code.

- Menu - div#menuPane
- Content - div#content

Answer: Classes vs IDs

Use IDs when there is only one occurrence per page. Use classes when there are one or more occurrences per page.