

HTML5: Adding Style

In part 2 of a look at HTML5, Nancy will show you how to add CSS to the previously unstyled document from part 1 and why there are some differences you need to watch out for. In this week's article, we are going to dive into styling the document created in [part 1](#) and show a couple of ways styling can be done without breaking the rules.

Styling Differences

As we saw last week in [Part 1](#), the HTML5 specification allows for new tags like header and footer, where previously we used to create divs with IDs having those names. With tags named for those pieces, we see that now a "header" can now be the header of a document, but also a header of a section or an article or even a footer which means one important difference when it comes to styling. THERE CAN BE MORE THAN ONE! The same is true with footer, article, section and even nav. Since the tag "nav", for example, is used to contain any navigation on our page, if we were to create CSS specifically for the "nav" tag, we would end up with all of our navigation on the page looking exactly the same. That is surely not desirable where one form of navigation may be a display list and another may be text navigation displayed horizontally.

The same is true for header, footer and other tags. Since different headers are often different sizes, colors and perhaps even fonts, we don't want them looking all the same, so we do NOT want to create CSS for the tag "header" or the other structural tags. So how do we do it? I'll show you a couple of options and you can decide what works best for you.

First, let's start with last week's document. I have copied the code in here for you so you won't have to go back and find the other article. Make a new document and copy the code in the code box below into it.

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML>
<html>
<head>
<meta charset="utf-8" />
<title>My HTML5 Document</title>
<!--[if IE]>
<script src="http://html5shiv.googlecode.com/svn/trunk/html5.js"></script>
<![endif]-->
<style>
  article, aside, dialog, figure, footer, header,
  hgroup, menu, nav, section { display: block; }
</style>
</head>

<body>
<header>
<h1>My Home Page</h1>
</header>
<nav>
<ul>
<li>About Me</li>
<li>My Blog</li>
<li>Contact Me</li>
</ul>
</nav>
<section>
```

```
<article>
<header>
<h2>My First Article: Football!</h2>
</header>
<p>I have a lot of interests but one of my biggest and most surprising is that I LOVE FOOTBALL! For those of you outside the United States, I'm not talking about soccer. I'm talking about good old American NFL, College and whatever Football! There is nothing like spending a Saturday glued to the television while you keep track of 18 college knock-down, dragouts on 6 channels. Then you follow that up on Sunday with the amazing, one-of-a-kind NFL (National Football League). Go, Brett Favre! </p>
</article>
<article>
<header>
<h2>My Second Article: Cooking with Flair</h2>
</header>
<p>I have been a mom for a pretty long time and every day for the last 20 some years of my life, I have prepared, in varying degrees of tirelessness, thousands of meals of all kinds and all nationalities for the brood that are my children. However, recently, thanks in no small part to my daughter Amy, I have taken a new interest in cooking via the Food Network. Whenever possible, Amy and I spend our lunch hours grabbing a bite while we watch some great Italian feast being prepared and, more often than not, we have to try this new wonder out ourselves within the next couple of days. We love it!</p>
</article>
</section>
<footer>
&copy; 2010 Nancy
</footer>
</body>
</html>
```

You will remember from last week that there are already a couple of styling notations in this document. One is a link to the HTML5 Shiv on Google Code, which is used to display HTML5 tags in Internet Explorer. This will probably not be necessary once Internet Explorer 9 becomes available at the end of 2010, but as that version is still in development, we'll develop a "wait and see" attitude to see what comes out at release time. We also have included in the document a display: block instruction for the new html tags that are currently not recognized in all but the up and coming browsers in order to get those browsers to display those new tags. It's your choice whether to move this second instruction to the CSS style sheet or keep it in the document. Either way is acceptable. I'm going to keep it here, but I will create all the other styles in an external style sheet so that I can switch them easily in this article.

Styling Choice #1: Keep It On the DIV

In the initial surge to get everyone to dump tables as design elements, we were all urged to create divs and lots of them. We made divs for everything, we added names to them and we then used those divs to set up CSS to style our pages. There is good and bad about that. The good is that we ended up with a unique area for everything that we could very highly customize. The bad about that is that we ended up with a unique area for everything that we had to highly customize. The other "bad" about that is that you ended up with a lot of </div> tags and you found yourself wondering which div you had ended and which one you still had to deal with. So we put comments before the closing tag which identified the end tag with something like this: **<!--end mydiv -->** </div> That worked for identification purposes, but if you use Dreamweaver Design View extensively, you will have noticed that Dreamweaver invariably adds future code between the comment and the tag which defeated the purpose of the comment. You could put the comment inside the tag, but that made for a messy tag and slowed you down if you were using

Dreamweaver's code completion. Nevertheless, divs are a great way to break up your content for styling purposes and is recommended for keeping the new HTML5 tags "clean" so let's dive in and style our page accordingly.

The example page is very simple with a title, very simple navigation and two articles for content that are enclosed in a section tag. At the bottom of the page is one simple footer for the page. Since this example is using divs to style the page, I'm going to start by dividing the page into basic sections. I know I want the main page header at the top, the navigation on the left, the content to the right of it and the footer at the bottom of the page. I'll draw those divs and give them appropriate id's to indicate those functions.

First, I want to be able to display the page in the center of the browser and I don't want it to go be too wide, so I'll create a div around the entire content of the page and label it with an id of "container". My next div is going to be around the header of the page, so I create a div around the first header tag on the page and give this div an id of header. Notice that I did not use the "header" tag to style the page header because my page contains header tags as headers of each of the two articles as well. My next div is around the nav element and is given an id of "sidebar". I use this label because I'm used to it when I create navigation on the left or the right side. I then create a div around my section tag (which includes my two articles) and I give this div an id of "content". This is where my content of the page lies. I also want to make sure my sidebar and content will float well together so I'm going to create another div that wraps around both of them and give it an id of "contentwrapper". In that way, I can apply styles that I want to apply to all of that section and still be able to style the two sections individually. My final section is the footer and while I don't have more than one footer on this page, I could have so I want to establish a best practice here and not use the html5 footer tag to style the footer section. Therefore, I will create one more div and give it an id of "footer" for the styling of this section.

The divided but still unstyled page code looks like this:

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML>
<html>
<head>
<meta charset="utf-8" />
<title>My HTML5 Document</title>
<!--[if IE]>
<script src="http://html5shiv.googlecode.com/svn/trunk/html5.js"></script>
<![endif]-->
<style>
  article, aside, dialog, figure, footer, header,
  hgroup, menu, nav, section { display: block; }
</style>
</head>

<body>
<div id="container">
  <div id="header">
    <header>
      <h1>My Home Page</h1>
    </header>
  <!--end header --> </div>
  <div id="contentwrapper">
    <div id="sidebar">
      <nav>
        <ul>
          <li>About Me</li>
          <li>My Blog</li>
          <li>Contact Me</li>
```

```
        </ul>
    </nav>
    <!--end sidebar --> </div>
<div id="content">
    <section>
        <article>
            <header>
                <h2>My First Article: Football!</h2>
            </header>
            <p>I have a lot of interests but one of my biggest and most surprising is
that I LOVE FOOTBALL! For those of you outside the United States, I'm not talking about
soccer. I'm talking about good old American NFL, College and whatever Football! There
is nothing like spending a Saturday glued to the television while you keep track of 18
college knock-down, dragouts on 6 channels. Then you follow that up on Sunday with the
amazing, one-of-a-kind NFL (National Football League). Go, Brett Favre! </p>
        </article>
        <article>
            <header>
                <h2>My Second Article: Cooking with Flair</h2>
            </header>
            <p>I have been a mom for a pretty long time and every day for the last 20
some years of my life, I have prepared, in varying degrees of tirelessness, thousands
of meals of all kinds and all nationalities for the brood that are my children.
However, recently, thanks in no small part to my daughter Amy, I have taken a new
interest in cooking via the Food Network. Whenever possible, Amy and I spend our lunch
hours grabbing a bite while we watch some great Italian feast being prepared and, more
often than not, we have to try this new wonder out ourselves within the next couple of
days. We love it!</p>
        </article>
    </section>
    <!--end content --> </div>
<!--end contentwrapper --> </div>
<div id="footer">
    <footer>
        &copy; 2010 Nancy
    </footer>
</div>
<!--end container --></div>
</body>
</html>
```

I like to keep my CSS separate from my document so I'm going to begin by creating a new document that I will call `divs.css` because I am using `divs` to style the document in this case. I will then attach the newly created stylesheet to the document so that I can see the changes as I create them. The first thing I will do is put a few basic styles on the `body` tag of the document to change the background color of the document and to zero the margins and padding so that the document as a whole isn't affecting styles I will create later on various `divs`. My CSS sheet code looks like this so far:

```
@charset "utf-8";
/* CSS Document */

body {
    background-color: #09C;
    margin: 0;
    padding: 0;
}
```

While I like the bluish color I have put on the page, I don't really want the content to sit on this color so I'll style the container div next, giving it a white background and a black border to make it look sharp and read well. I'll also add some margins and padding and give the container a width of 760px that will sit in the center of the browser. Here is the code:

```
#container {
    background-color: #FFF;
    width: 760px;
    margin: 0 auto;
    border-left: solid #000 1px;
    border-right: solid #000 1px;
    padding: 0px 10px 10px 15px;
}
```

NOTE: I used separate border-left and border-right attributes with identical styling to style the left and right borders rather than just the border attribute because I don't want those borders on the top or bottom. If the border is needed all the way around, these two could be consolidated into one rule using just border as the attribute.

The next thing I want to do is to divide up the content sections within the contentwrapper div so they display correctly. I do this now because I want my page to look more or less like my page is going to look before going much further. This allows me to make decisions about other styles to the page with better information and keeps styling "trial and error" time to a minimum.

The sidebar div is the navigation so I want it to display to the left of the content area. I'll give it a width of 180px which leaves 580px left for the right (content) side of the page. I'll also float both the sidebar and the content divs left so they will display side by side. The code and screenshot of the page follow.

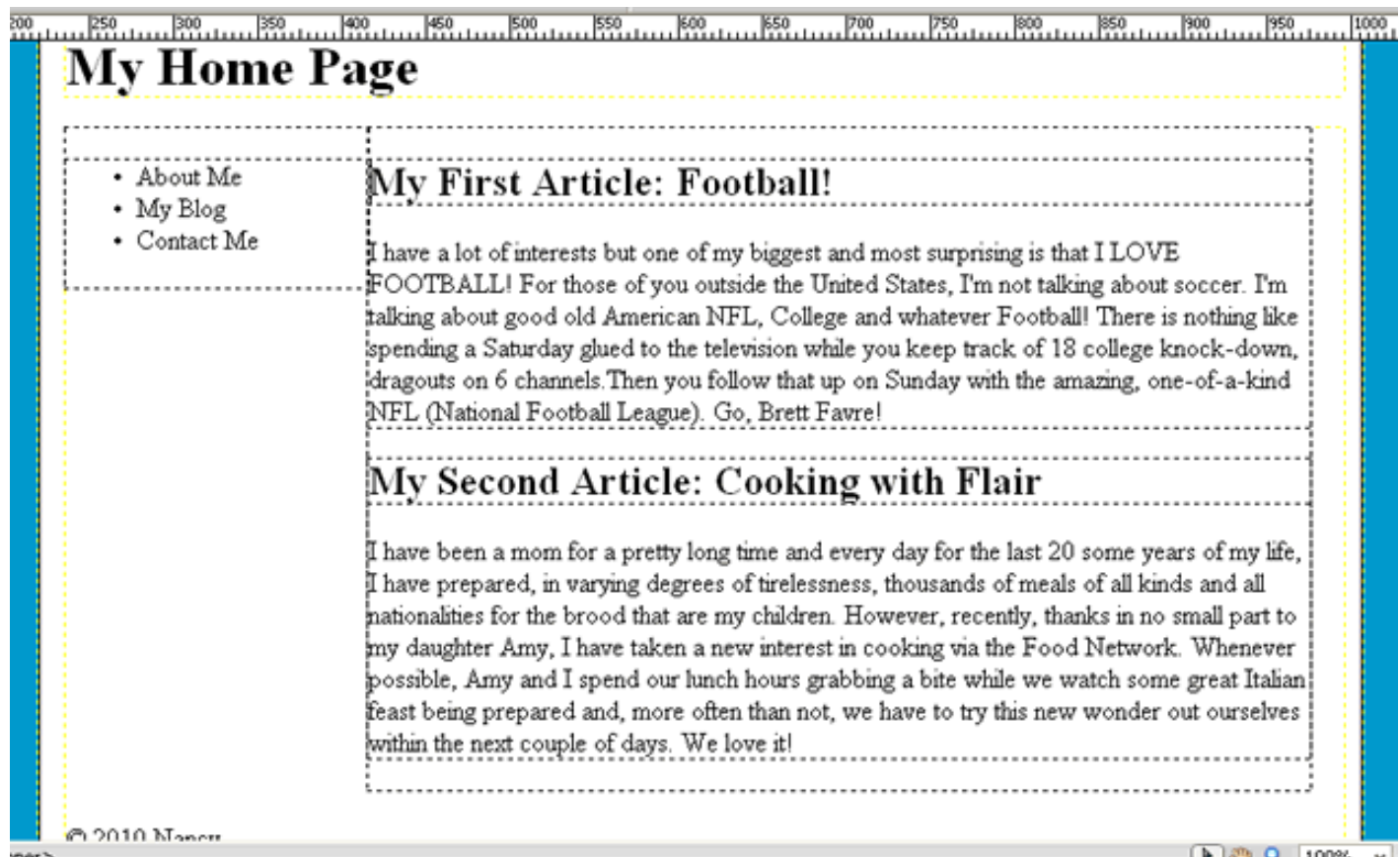
CSS Code for the sidebar and content divs:

```
#container #contentwrapper #sidebar {
    float: left;
    width: 180px;
}
#container #contentwrapper #content {
    float: left;
    width: 560px;
}
```

The page is beginning to take shape as shown in the screenshot on the following page:

Please note that the contentwrapper will sit at the top of the sidebar and content wrappers instead of enclosing the interior divs unless a break is added to the bottom of the html code just before the closing contentwrapper tag. Some people just use the break tag and set it equal to all and others create a class for the break tag to do the same thing, but this needs to be added to force the content wrapper to contain its contents. The code is `<br clear="all">` or create a class with the following:

```
.clearfloat {  
    clear:both;  
    height:0;  
    font-size: 1px;  
    line-height: 0px;  
}
```



The div styled page thus far

The final steps are to style the type and headers of the various divs with the styles that look good to you. There isn't a lot of magic here; it's just text styles and a bit of margin manipulation to get what you want. The exception to this would be the navigation which has list-type set to none to get rid of the bullets and some margin and padding applied to make it look and behave more like a menu. I haven't added the "A" tags and the styling to the links in this example, but in a working page, those would be added as well.

Styling Choice #2: Do It With Class

Another solution to the styling quandary is to forget adding the divs and use classes instead. As I mentioned in the first article, the Dreamweaver group changed the example pages from version CS4 to version CS5 by changing the use of DIV IDs in CS4 to using classes in CS5. I am not too sure about the wisdom of so doing, but we'll give it a shot. The nice thing about classes is that you can have as many as you want and you can apply a given class to anything. The really nice thing about classes is that you can apply more than one to the same tag, although Dreamweaver by default doesn't support more than one. However, if you are looking to create a unique style that will apply to only one thing, then it is more appropriate to use an ID on a div. The rule of thumb is that IDs mean unique and classes mean reusable. That said, let's make the same page but this time we'll use classes instead of divs.

We will still need to create a few divs because we need some structure to apply the classes to. The most important div we still need is the container but we'll create the css as a class this time around. We'll have the same background color on the body and we'll use the same specifications on the container div only the styles will be assigned to a class rather than an ID.

The code for the container class is as follows:

```
.container {
    background-color: #FFF;
    width: 760px;
    margin: 0 auto;
    border-left: solid #000 1px;
    border-right: solid #000 1px;
    padding: 0px 10px 0px 15px;
    font-family: Verdana, Geneva, sans-serif;
    font-size: 14px;
}
```

From this point on, the technique is very similar to the first example, only this time, rather than creating divs to wrap the code elements in, we are applying classes to specific markup and styling those classes. The complete html for the class styled page is as follows:

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML>
<html>
<head>
<meta charset="utf-8" />
<title>My HTML5 Document</title>
<!--[if IE]>
<script src="http://html5shiv.googlecode.com/svn/trunk/html5.js"></script>
<![endif]-->
<style>
    article, aside, dialog, figure, footer, header,
    hgroup, menu, nav, section { display: block; }
</style>
<link href="class.css" rel="stylesheet" type="text/css">
</head>

<body>
<div class="container">
<header class="mainhead">
<h1>My Home Page</h1>
```



```
</header>
<nav class="sidebar">
<ul>
<li>About Me</li>
<li>My Blog</li>
<li>Contact Me</li>
</ul>
</nav>
<section class="content">
<article>
<header>
<h2>My First Article: Football!</h2>
</header>
<p>I have a lot of interests but one of my biggest and most surprising is that I LOVE FOOTBALL! For those of you outside the United States, I'm not talking about soccer. I'm talking about good old American NFL, College and whatever Football! There is nothing like spending a Saturday glued to the television while you keep track of 18 college knock-down, dragouts on 6 channels. Then you follow that up on Sunday with the amazing, one-of-a-kind NFL (National Football League). Go, Brett Favre! </p>
</article>
```

```
<article>
<header>
<h2>My Second Article: Cooking with Flair</h2>
</header>
<p>I have been a mom for a pretty long time and every day for the last 20 some years of my life, I have prepared, in varying degrees of tirelessness, thousands of meals of all kinds and all nationalities for the brood that are my children. However, recently, thanks in no small part to my daughter Amy, I have taken a new interest in cooking via the Food Network. Whenever possible, Amy and I spend our lunch hours grabbing a bite while we watch some great Italian feast being prepared and, more often than not, we have to try this new wonder out ourselves within the next couple of days. We love it!</p>
</article>
</section>
<br clear="all">
<footer class="bottom">
&copy; 2010 Nancy
</footer>
</div>
</body>
</html>
```

The CSS page for this example looks like this:

```
@charset "utf-8";
/* CSS Document */

body {
    background-color: #09C;
    margin: 0;
    padding: 0;
}

.container {
    background-color: #FFF;
    width: 760px;
```



```
margin: 0 auto;
border-left: solid #000 1px;
border-right: solid #000 1px;
padding: 0px 10px 0px 15px;
font-family: Verdana, Geneva, sans-serif;
font-size: 14px;
}
.sidebar {
  float: left;
  width: 180px;
}
.sidebar ul {
  list-style-type: none;
  padding: 5px 10px;
}
.sidebar li {
  margin-bottom: 5px;
}
.content {
  float: left;
  width: 560px;
  padding-left: 10px;
}
.bottom {
  background-color: #FFC;
  font-size: 10px;
}
.mainhead {
  font-family: "Trebuchet MS", Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
  text-align: center;
}
```

This creates a page that looks basically the same as the first one. You can see if below:



The same page created with CSS classes.

This discussion shows you a couple of ways to basically create the same thing and there are others as well. Current practice suggests that one should not put style classes directly on the html5 structural tags, but you may have noticed in the second example that I did so on the footer with desired results. If you're thinking this raises some questions about doing it one way or another, I agree with you. The answers to those questions will be the subject for a future article. Count on it.

One note if you have begun to use the HTML5 pack from Adobe Labs. There are two HTML5 layouts included in the HTML5 pack that has some improper use of HTML5, specifically using h1 and h2 tags outside the header to which they apply. This is improper use of HTML5 structure and I will be bringing this to their attention. My advice is either to not use them or correct them in your pages by moving the h1 or h2 inside the header tag.