

CSS3

Foundations

Ian Lunn





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treehouse™

CSS3 Foundations

Ian Lunn



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About the Author

IAN LUNN (DEVON, UK) is a Freelance Front End Developer, passionate about building the future of the web using technologies such as CSS3 and HTML5. With a Higher National Diploma in Internet Technology, Ian combines his education with expertise in CSS, HTML, JavaScript, and WordPress to build creative and effective websites and applications. Ian's enthusiasm for utilizing cutting edge technologies is matched by his dedication for advocating them; sharing his knowledge with the community, in the form of blog tutorials and open source projects.

Follow @IanLunn on Twitter (www.twitter.com/IanLunn) where he shares links and ideas about web design and development.

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Introduction

YOU'RE READING CSS3 FOUNDATIONS at an exciting time. Right now, the way in which the web is styled is undergoing changes, and with the constant advancement of technology, that doesn't look to end any time soon. The web is already a beautiful place, but with more features allowing you to style a page than ever, the possibilities of what can be created are endless.

Who Should Read This Book?

CSS3 Foundations is for those completely new to styling web pages, but also makes as a great reference for those familiar with CSS too—particularly when you want to remind yourself of the newest CSS features that you may not have committed to memory.

Ideally, you have a basic understanding of HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) but it's not essential. The HTML that makes up the web page built upon throughout *CSS3 Foundations* is provided for you and described in Chapter 2. So, whether you've chosen to start learning CSS before HTML, or vice versa, you'll be gently eased into both technologies.

If you're a hobbyist, somebody looking to make a career change into the wonderful world of the web industry, an owner of a website that is need of restyling, or a web designer/developer looking to upgrade your skills to the most recent techniques and methods in use today, *CSS3 Foundations* is for you.

What You Will Learn

CSS3 Foundations aims to get you not just hitting the ground running, but hopping, stepping, and jumping too!

You'll go from the very basics of styling a web page; changing the background color, the size of text, and so on, all the way through to more advanced topics such as animations and media queries, which allow you to change a page's layout for different sizes of device.

Although the easiest topics come first and slowly progress to reach the more advanced chapters, the way in which *CSS3 Foundations* is laid out represents the workflow I, and many other people in the web industry use to create a website. So, as well as learning CSS, you'll also learn a “best practice” approach that can be applied to real-world projects, to make pages not just great to look at, but easy to update and robust enough to be viewed on a wide range of devices too (such as desktop computer and mobile phone).

You'll also learn methods and techniques not described in the CSS specification (the official technical document that explains CSS), which web designers and developers have relied on for years to make the most of CSS.

How to Use This Book

In Chapter 2, I'll introduce you to a fictitious company that has asked you to create a web page—there's no pay but the experience is golden! You'll be able to download the necessary project files to get started. This download contains updated project files for each chapter (which are sometimes broken into milestones for the bigger chapters). I'll let you know when a milestone is reached and you can either use the project files to compare to your own work, or switch to that milestone's project files in case you didn't follow the steps that came before it.

Depending on your current experience with CSS, you may decide to jump ahead to the chapters that interest you most -- that's fine, the beginning of each chapter will let you know which project files to start with.

Once you've finished reading *CSS3 Foundations*, it'll make a great desktop companion for when you need to remind yourself on how to use a feature or solve a particular problem. Each property description includes useful information for quick reference, such as the property's initial value, browser compatibility, and so on. If you're unfamiliar with those terms, I'll explain those too!

Using This Book with Treehouse

By no means do you need to be a member of Treehouse to make the most out of *CSS3 Foundations*, but the two sit nicely together. Although both aim to be extensive, there's certainly always something extra to learn.



What's more, Treehouse's video courses are often followed by fun, interactive challenges that put what you've learned to the test. You can redo a challenge as many times as you like until you feel comfortable with the topic being covered.

Treehouse also has a great community (which I am pleased to be a part of), so if at any time you have a question or want to show off your CSS skills, come and join in!

part 1

Introduction

[chapter one](#) Understanding CSS and the Modern Web

[chapter two](#) Getting Started

chapter one

Understanding CSS and the Modern Web

IN THIS CHAPTER, you'll learn what the modern web is and why CSS is so important to it.

What Is the Modern Web?

Most importantly, the web today is what it has always been—accessible information. Unlike the early days of the web, though—when it was just a collection of text files—the modern web has grown to support many differing media formats and now, more than ever, many differing ways to access information.

No longer do you just sit at a desktop computer to “log on.” Nowadays, you sit on a beach reading the news on a tablet device, you go to a coffee shop with laptop in hand to chat with friends in different countries, and you try to refrain from laughing at pictures of cats playing keyboards while viewing a smart phone on a train journey. The information on the web is practically infinite (more content is created than you could ever consume), and the way in which you access that information continues to grow.

The modern web is an exciting media to be a part of. It is continuously growing and so too are the technologies behind it.

What Is CSS?

Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) is a simple language defining styles that can be applied to HTML. Where HTML describes the structure of a web page, CSS describes its presentation.

An international community called the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) writes and maintains the CSS specifications that define and standardize the way in which people should write the CSS language and browser vendors (the people who make web browsers) should implement it. Because the CSS specification has grown since its introduction in 1996, the latest version, CSS3, has been broken up into modules so that each defines a part of CSS, making the overall specification easier to maintain.

You can find the CSS specifications at www.w3.org/Style/CSS/. Because these specifications are very much technical and in depth, you may find them off-putting. I know I do! Although they are useful to refer to from time to time, by no means do you need to read them. *CSS3 Foundations* takes a much more simple and friendly approach to your understanding of CSS3.

Before you take a closer look at what CSS can offer, you should first understand the current state of CSS. You may have noticed I referred to both CSS and CSS3. What's the difference?

CSS refers to all three levels of the specification: CSS Level 1 (CSS1), CSS Level 2 (CSS2), and CSS Level 3 (CSS3). Each level of CSS builds on its predecessor. CSS2 had a shaky start and many issues came to light, leading to a revision of this specification and the release of CSS2.1. So, CSS3 contains aspects of its predecessor CSS2.1, and CSS2.1 contains aspects of CSS2 and CSS1.

Although each CSS level builds on its predecessor, where relevant, a level recommends a particular feature from its

predecessor no longer be used and thus deprecated. This means that when referring to CSS3, one is actually referring to all the features made available throughout CSS, except those that have been deprecated.

In *CSS3 Foundations*, you learn CSS3, which includes not just the newest of features, but also those from the previous CSS levels that experienced designers and developers have relied on for years.

The Role of CSS

The main purpose of CSS is to separate structure (HTML) from presentation (CSS). Figure 1-1 shows a web page that consists only of HTML, without any CSS.

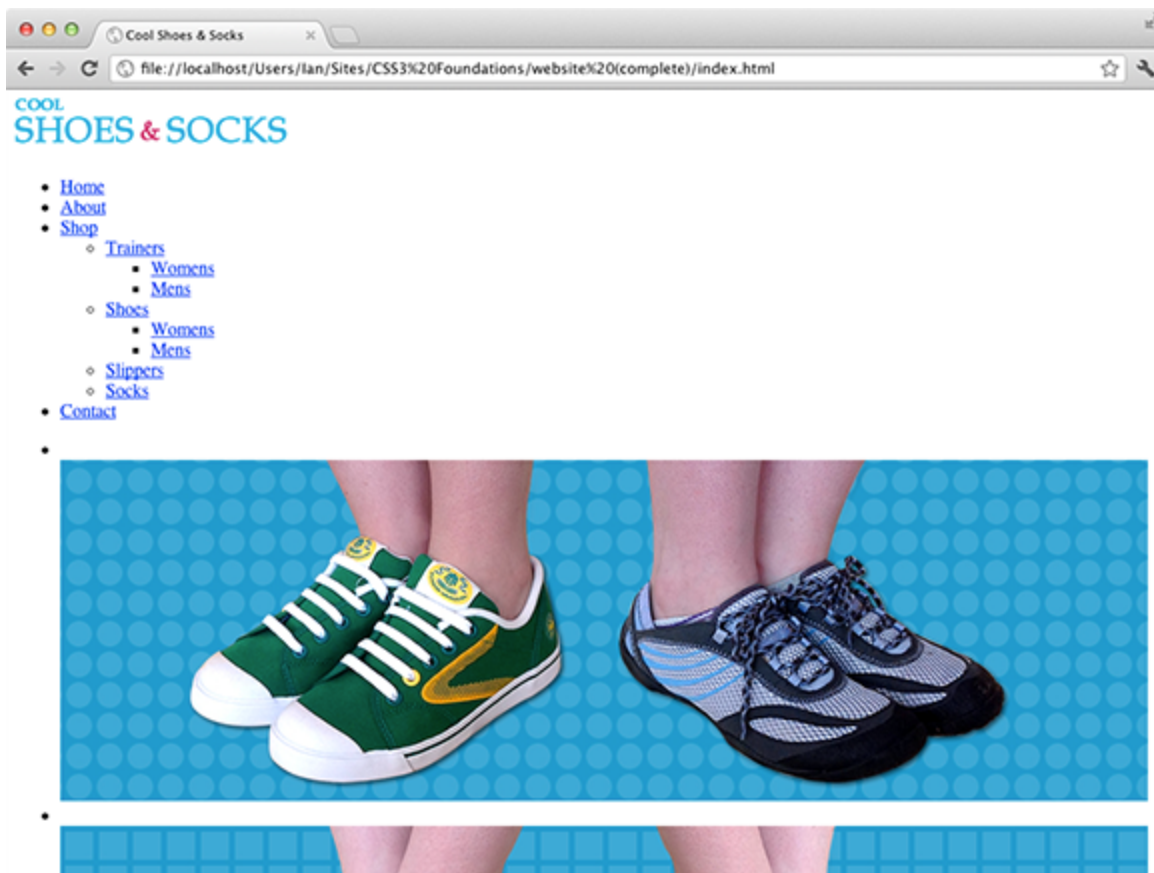


Figure 1-1 A web page without any CSS.