

GRA 2141: Web Page Design

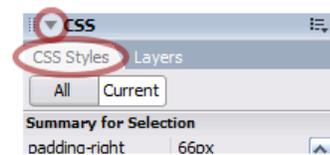
Using CSS in Dreamweaver

Fortunately, when we were writing our **HTML**, inserting tags and choosing attributes, we didn't have to code anything by hand. Instead, Dreamweaver's interface made it easy, and wrote the code for us behind the scenes. Everything could be done with the insert panel and properties panel.

The same can be said when writing **CSS**: We don't need to hand code our styles, or memorize the hundreds of properties at our disposal. Instead, we can create rules, set properties, and apply the whole lot to various HTML elements inside of Dreamweaver's interface. In this case, it can all be done using the **CSS Styles** panel.

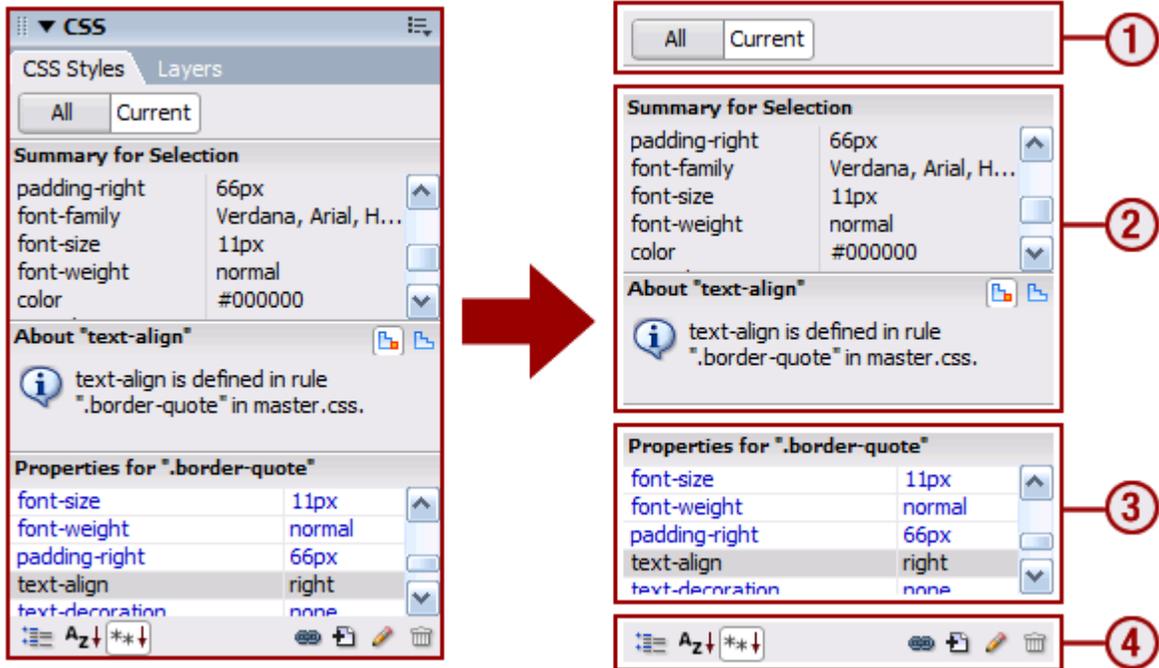


You should see the **CSS Styles** panel with the others on the right of Dreamweaver's interface. If not, you can bring it up by going to **window > CSS styles**.



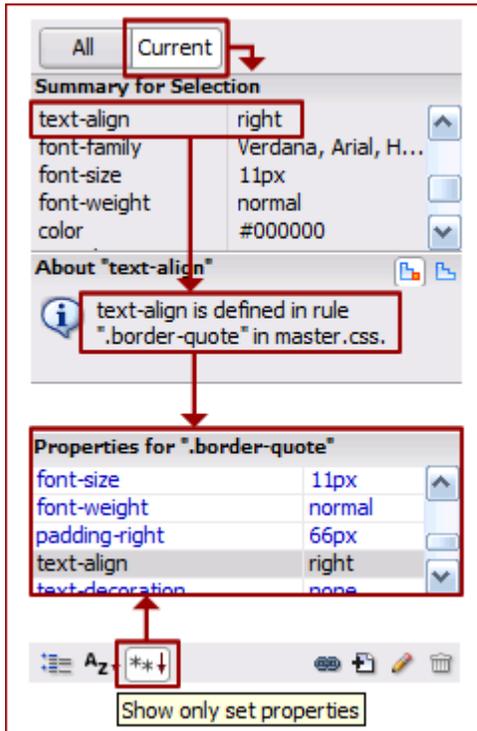
The panel may be grouped into a panel set titled **CSS**. If not already, you can expand this panel set by clicking the arrow on the left side of its title. If not already selected, click the **CSS Styles** tab to bring it up.

Once opened, clicked, and tabbed, we get to see the **CSS Styles** panel in all its glory. To help us in familiarizing ourselves with this panel, let's talk about it by breaking it down into 4 sections, noting the diagram below:



Section One allows us to switch between two different views inside the panel. We can view only the styles that are applied relative to what we **currently have selected** inside our document window. Alternatively, we can view **all** the styles we have created and linked to the HTML document we currently have open.

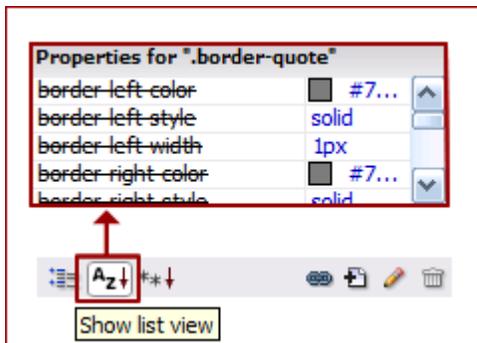
With "Current" Selected:



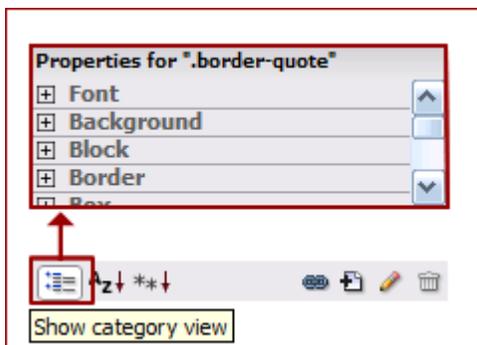
In **Section 2**, we see a summary of all the **properties** that are affecting the current element. We can **double click** each property and/or value to edit its settings. Doing so will open a **popup window** (we'll talk more about this popup window in a second).

Below the properties, we have a summary that tells us which **rule** each style is defined in, and which CSS document that **rule** appears in. Each time we click one of the properties, this summary is updated.

Section 3 also changes depending on which view we choose (note the red box with the up arrow below). Currently, with **"show only set properties"** chosen, we see a list of all the **properties** currently set for the applicable **rule**. This works great when we don't want to add new styles, just edit ones that we've already created.

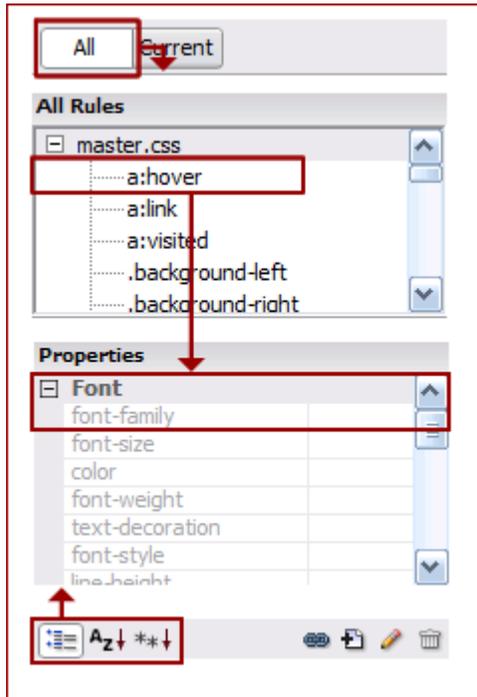


Alternatively, we can choose **"show list view"**, which allows us to view, set, and edit **all properties** that apply to the current **rule**, even one's that we haven't set yet. This is one quick and easy way to create new styles. In this view, **properties** are listed alphabetically, making it easy to quickly find a style that we know the name of.



The third and final view is **"show category view"**. This works like "show list view", except all the **properties** available to us are organized into categories for easy access. This is great for tracking down property names when we aren't sure exactly what their names are. We can expand or collapse each category by clicking the plus-minus sign to the left.

With "All" Selected



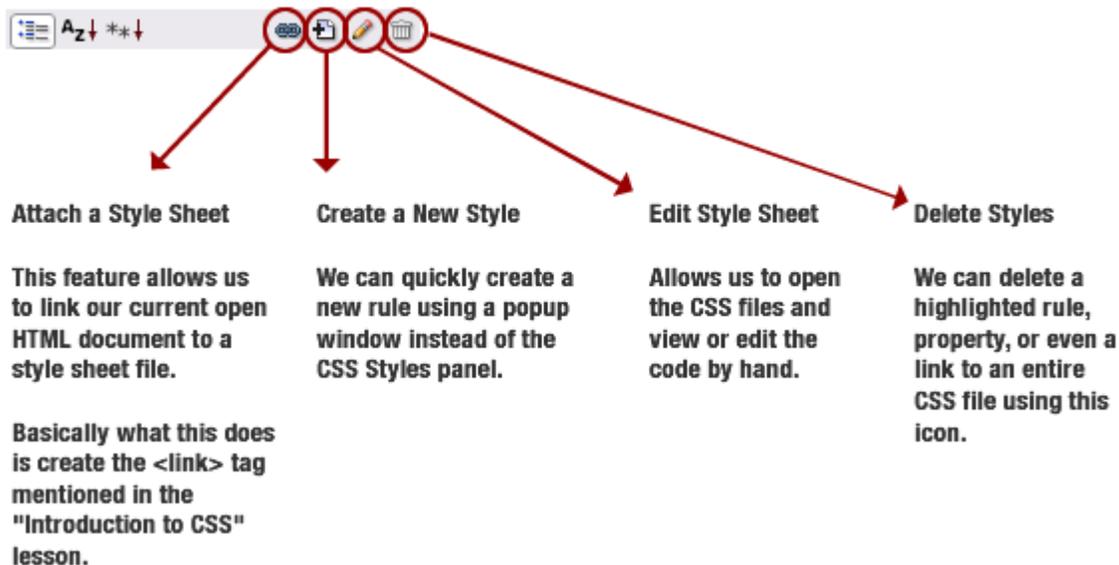
Alternatively, we can choose **"all"** from **Section 1** at the top. This view is a bit more intuitive and more organized, provided you know what **rules** have already been created, and what elements they are applied to.

Section 2 shows us a complete list of all **rules** that have been created. Since we can link multiple style sheet files to a single HTML document, we see a tree view, organized by CSS file name. You can expand and collapse each file by clicking the **plus-minus icon** to the left of the file name. You can also edit each individual **rule** by double clicking it.

When a **rule** is highlighted, a listing of properties appears in **Section 3**. Like the **"current"** view, we can switch this to **category, list, or set properties** views by toggling the desired button in **Section 4**.

Additional Features at our Disposal

To the right of **Section 4**, we also have for additional buttons we can use. The function of these buttons are described below:



Starting from Scratch: Using CSS in Dreamweaver

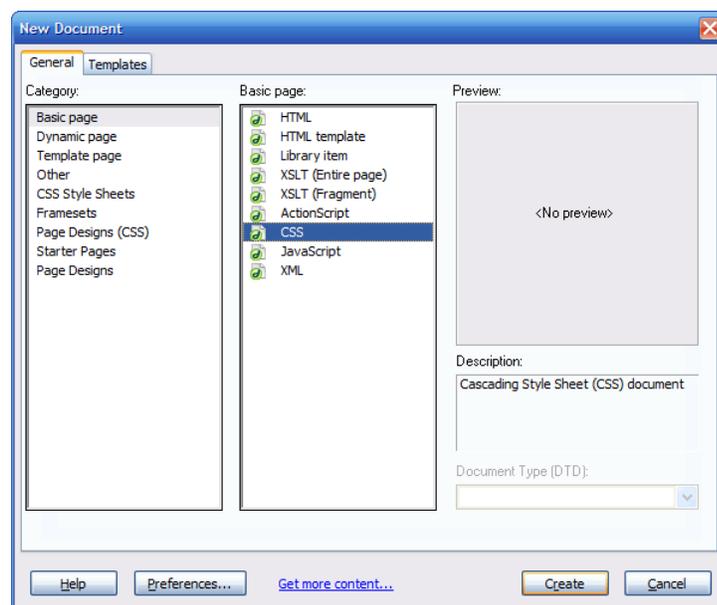
So we know how this panel works, now what? If you recall the “Introduction to CSS” lesson, we need to follow 4 main steps when using style sheets:

1. We need to create a new **CSS document**, and save it with the **“.css”** extension.
2. We need to **link** this new CSS document to our HTML document.
3. We need to create our styles:
 - a. We need to create **rules** to name sets of styles we create.
 - b. We need to add **properties** we wish to affect to each rule.
 - c. We need to give these properties the appropriate **values** we want.
4. We need to **apply** each of these rules to the elements we want to change the appearance of.

So let’s go over how to achieve each step in detail:

1. Create a new CSS Document

We create a new CSS document the same way we would an HTML file in Dreamweaver: go to **file > new** then from the popup window, choose **basic page > css**, then click **create**.

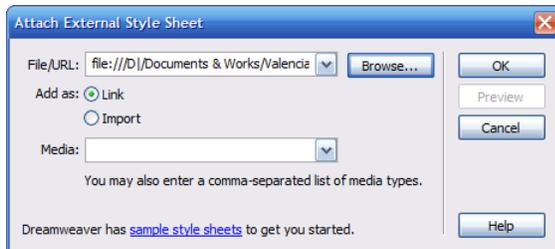


After you click **create**, you will be presented with a new, blank CSS document. Go ahead and save it by going to **file > save as**. For best practice, we like to keep everything in our site organized, so we are going to create a new folder called **“css”** and save there. In some situations, you may have more than one CSS document you are using, so you may wish to give it a descriptive name. For most small, simpler sites, one style sheet file will do just fine. Names like “site.css”, “master.css”, or “styles.css” are all very popular names used in this instance. Since we are going to create and edit our styles using the panel, we don’t need to leave this document open – we can safely close it once saved.

2. Link the new CSS Document to your HTML File

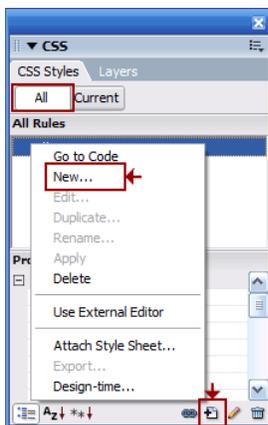


Now that the document is created, we need to let our HTML files know that's it there, and we'd like them to use it. We do this by **linking** the file, which is as simple as clicking the **"Attach Style Sheet"** button at the bottom of the **CSS Styles** panel.



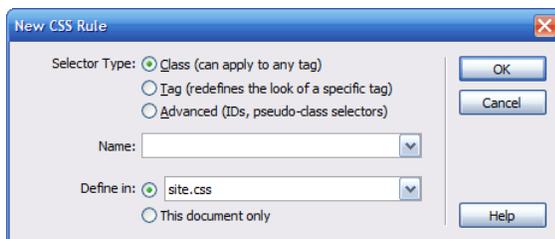
In the dialog box that appears, browse to the **CSS Document** you have just created, and click **OK**. For **"Add as:"** make sure **Link** is chosen. **"Media:"** can be left blank, or changed to **All**. When finished, click **OK** again to finish linking the style sheet.

3. Create your Styles



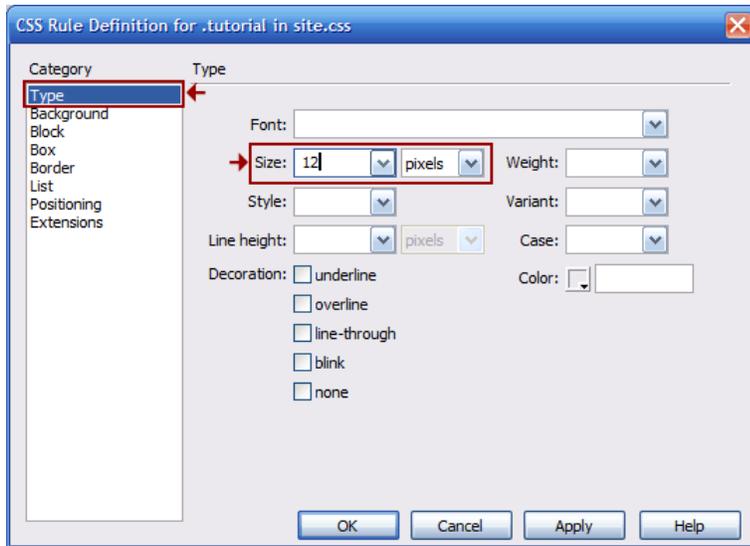
As discussed in previous sections, there are several ways to add new styles, or to edit existing ones. All can be done from the **CSS Styles** panel. Note that for the rest of this lecture, we will rely on the **"All"** view to create and edit our styles, so select **"All"** from the top of the **CSS Styles** panel.

The first step is to create a **rule**. There are two ways we can do this: either right click anywhere inside the "All Rules" area, or click the "New CSS Rule" at the bottom of the panel. Either way, you will be presented with a new dialog box like the one shown below:



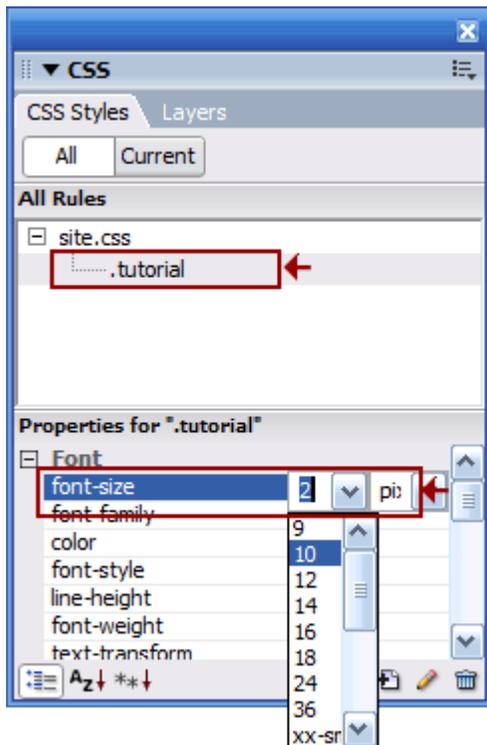
Remember how there are 3 ways we can make rules: by using **tags, classes, or IDs**? The **"Selector Type:"** chooser is where we get to choose which one we want to use. The first and most common is to use a **class**, so select that one. The **"Name:"** field allows us to give our new **class a name** (remember that if we are using **tags**, this step is irrelevant). Finally for **"Define in:"**, make sure the style sheet filename we created is shown.

Note that **classes** always begin with a **."**. If you do not specify one in this dialog box, Dreamweaver will automatically add one for you. After clicking **OK**, we are now free to add **properties** this rule. We will see a new dialog box like the one below:



All the **properties** at our disposal are organized into categories on the left, and appear on the right in clear, plain English. We can set **values** in the form fields and boxes for each **property**.

Note that although you may be tempted to set **everything**, keep in mind that everything has a default way of behaving. For instance content inside a **table cell** always appears aligned to the left middle, so specifying this with style sheets is redundant and unnecessary. Try to stick to only the necessary styles to keep things simple and clean.



After we are finished, and click **OK**, we can always come back and edit or add additional styles later. You can double click on the style name in the **"All Rules"** section, which will bring the dialog box back up.

You can also edit the style directly using one of three property views (**category, list, or current** views – see the earlier discussion above for more details on these). Make sure the **rule** you wish to edit is selected, then click and enter new **values** for the desired **properties**.

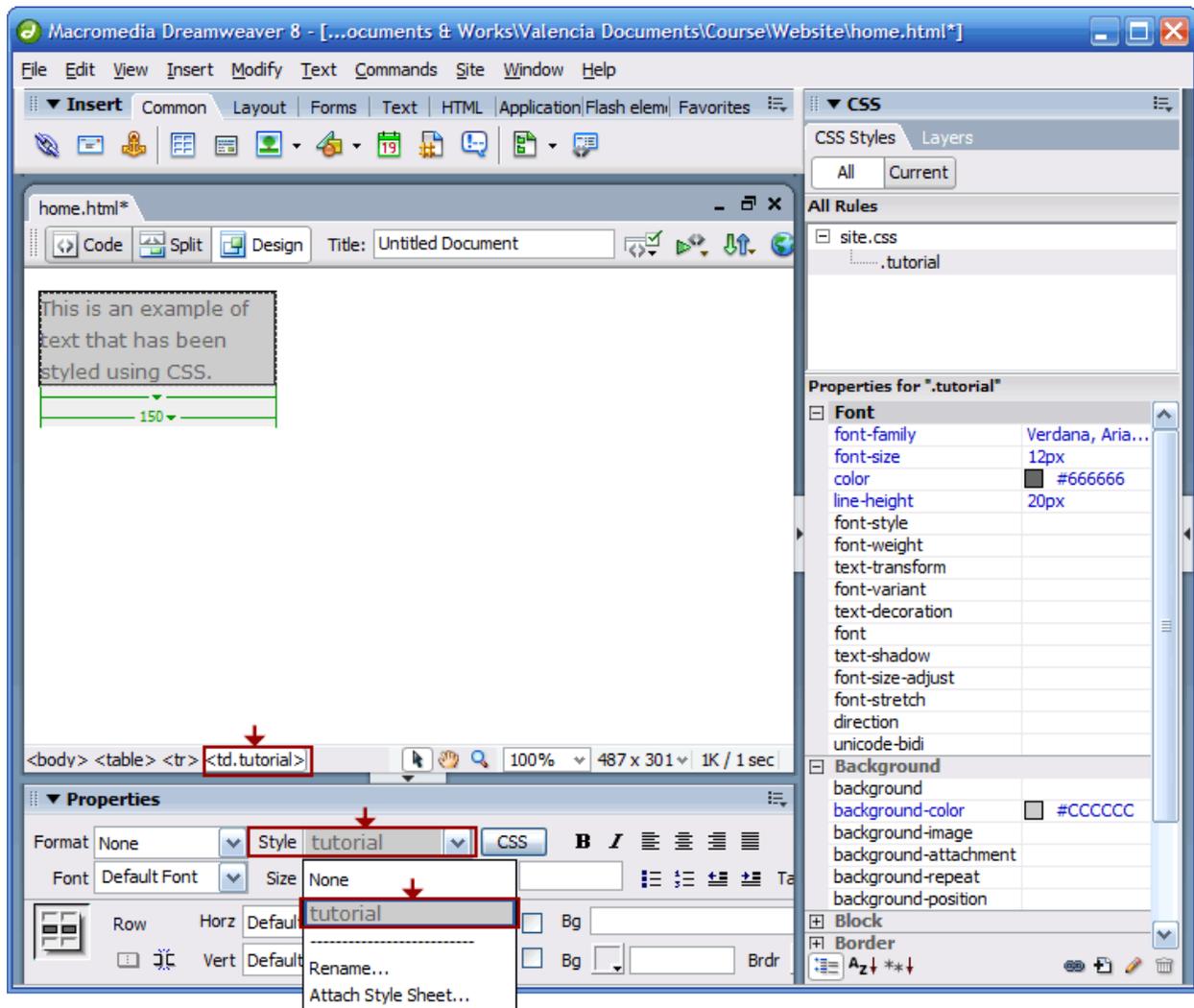
We can continue adding new **rules**, and applying **properties** to them in the same fashion, returning to this dialog box as we continue to edit and add elements to our HTML page.

4. Apply Your Rules to the Appropriate Elements

Every thing is set up, except for one small detail: how do we actually use these rules to change how things look on the page, and how do we choose which elements we want a rule to apply to?

It's easy, and it's all done through Dreamweaver's **properties panel**. Yup, the same one we've been using to apply **attributes** to various elements on the page to control colors, sizes, backgrounds, and fonts. Now, since all of this will be controlled by our style sheets, we only need to set one **attribute**: the

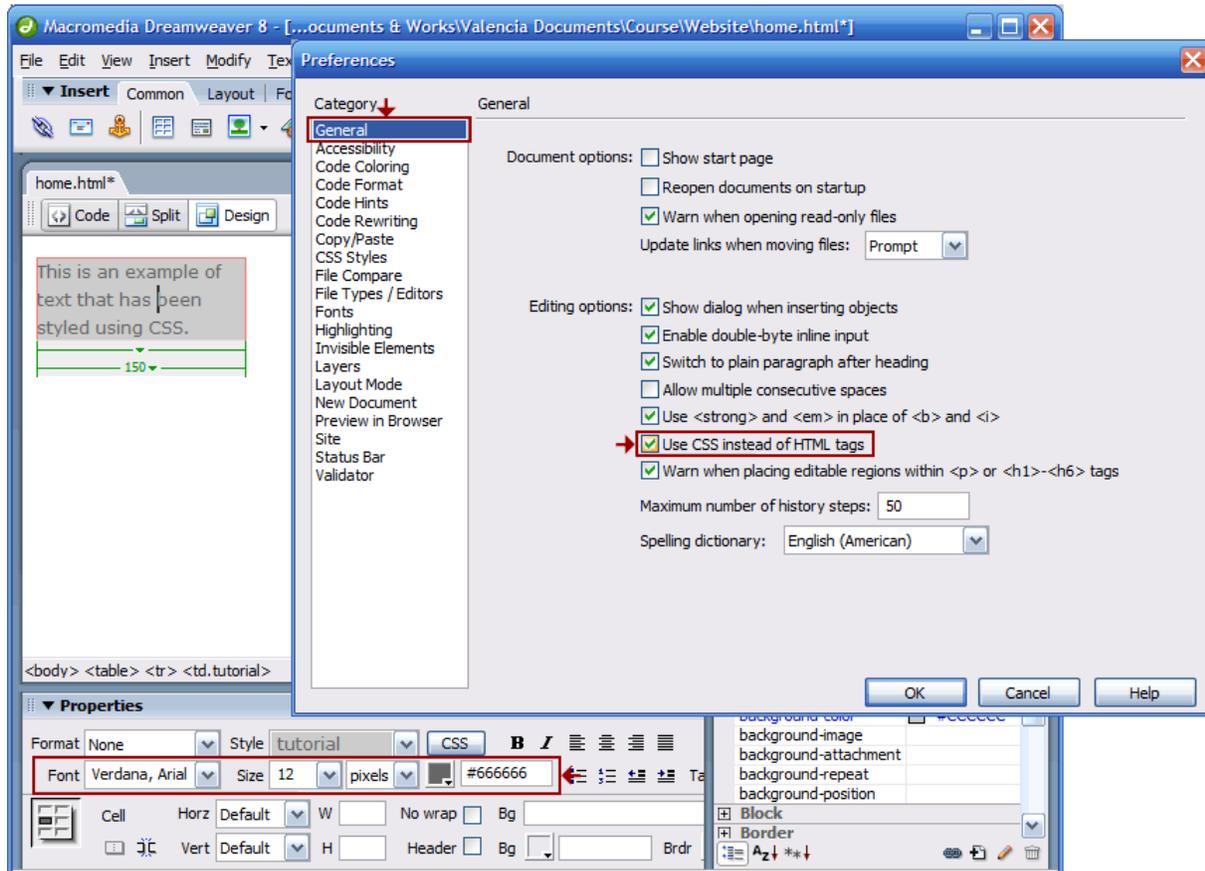
one that assigns a style to our element. To do so, make sure the correct element is selected in the document window (you may wish to refer to the list of **tags** at the bottom of the **document window** to make sure you have the right one) and choose the style name from the **"Style"** dropdown menu, located in the **properties panel**. The element you chose will automatically have the style applied, and its appearance will be updated in the document window with the styles you have created.



Note: For most elements, the dropdown you need to set is called **"Style"**, but for **tables**, the **properties panel** changes a bit, so the one you are looking for is called **"Class"** which is to the right a bit. You can continue to apply **rules** in the same manner as you go along, or after you are finished laying out the basic elements on the page.

One Final Note

As you may remember, we changed Dreamweaver's preferences a bit to not use CSS instead of HTML tags. We did this because we didn't want to confuse which was which. But now that we know what CSS is, we can turn it back on. To do so, go to **edit > preferences**, then choose **"Use CSS instead of HTML tags"** from the **"General"** preferences category.



Once we do so, we can now even edit some of the basic styles directly from the **properties panel**, like widths, heights, and font **properties**. This is yet another way Dreamweaver makes your Web page designs easier.