

In this guide you will learn:

- the different options for laying out a Web page
- how to use existing CSS layouts
- how to layout a page using HTML tables

## LAYOUT OPTIONS

---

When laying out a Web page designers have a number of options to choose from.

Originally, designers used HTML tables to layout page content. By inserting a table into a Web page a designer could control the placement of objects in rows and columns.

More recently designers have been encouraged to stop using tables for Web page layouts. Instead, a new computer language, CSS (Cascading Style Sheets), was created to replace tables.

CSS actually provides designers with a number of new Web design options - everything from new font sizes and font styles to control over the placement of items on a page.

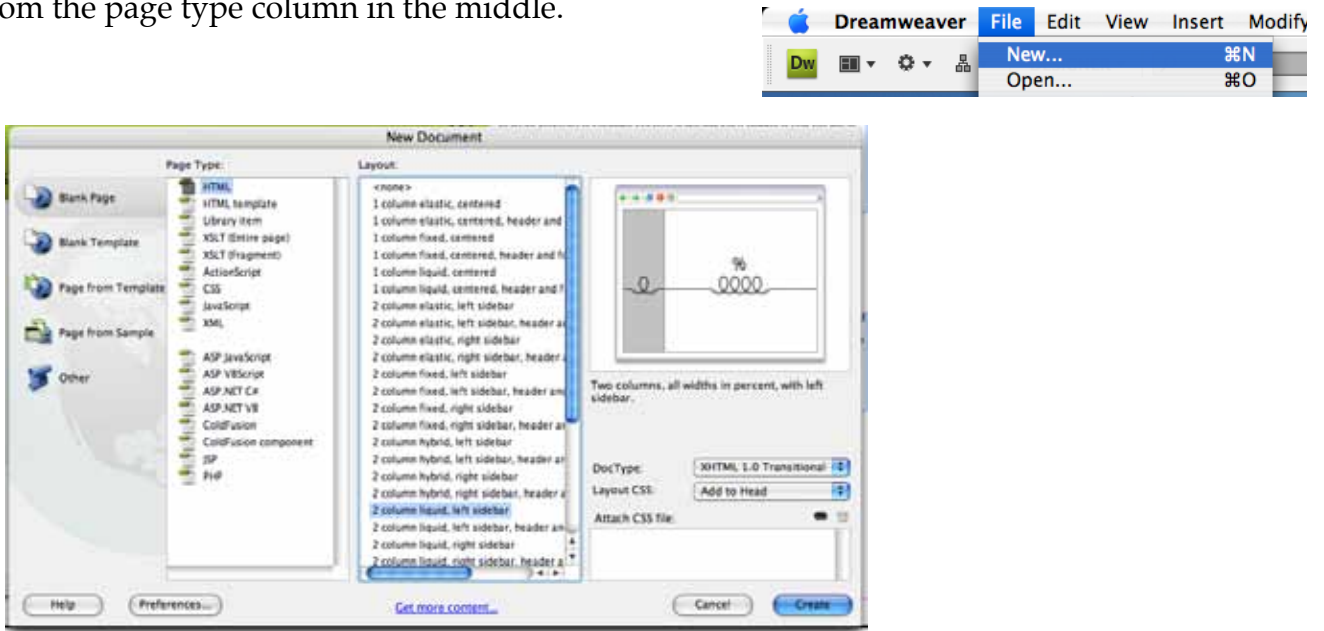
CSS is still in development, so designers sometimes run into problems when using it to layout a Web page. To design an entire page in CSS from scratch takes more skills than those that will be covered in this class/handout. But thankfully Dreamweaver has taken some of the kinks of using CSS for layouts by providing users with pre-existing layouts.

So what does this mean for you as a designer? You can choose to use a Dreamweaver layout using CSS or you can create your own layout using HTML tables. Either option will provide you with the elements needed for creating a basic Web page.

## USING DREAMWEAVER CSS LAYOUTS

Dreamweaver has taken some of the headaches out of using CSS for Web page layout by creating a number of pre-designed layouts for you to choose from.

To start a new Web page using a pre-existing layout select “new” from the “file” menu. A pop up window will appear. Select “blank page” from the column on the left, then “HTML” from the page type column in the middle.



Now you'll need to select which type of layout you'd like to use from the column on the right.

You have three basic page layout choices:

- one column (providing one column for content)
- two columns (providing two columns for content - one column can be used as a “side bar” on the right or left)
- three columns (providing three different columns for content, including sidebars)

You'll also need to decide how you want to assign column widths:

- elastic - column widths will vary with font size (an “em” is the width of an “m” in a font)
- fixed - column widths are fixed in pixels
- liquid - widths are set in percentages and will adjust to the size of the browser window
- hybrid - combines the use of em's in one column with percentages in another column

You can also select layouts containing header and footers.

A preview of each layout is provided in the pop-up window. Select the layout that closes matches the layout of your desired page and click “create.”

A new Web page will open with your selected layout. Sample text will be placed in the content areas - you'll replace this later as you add information.

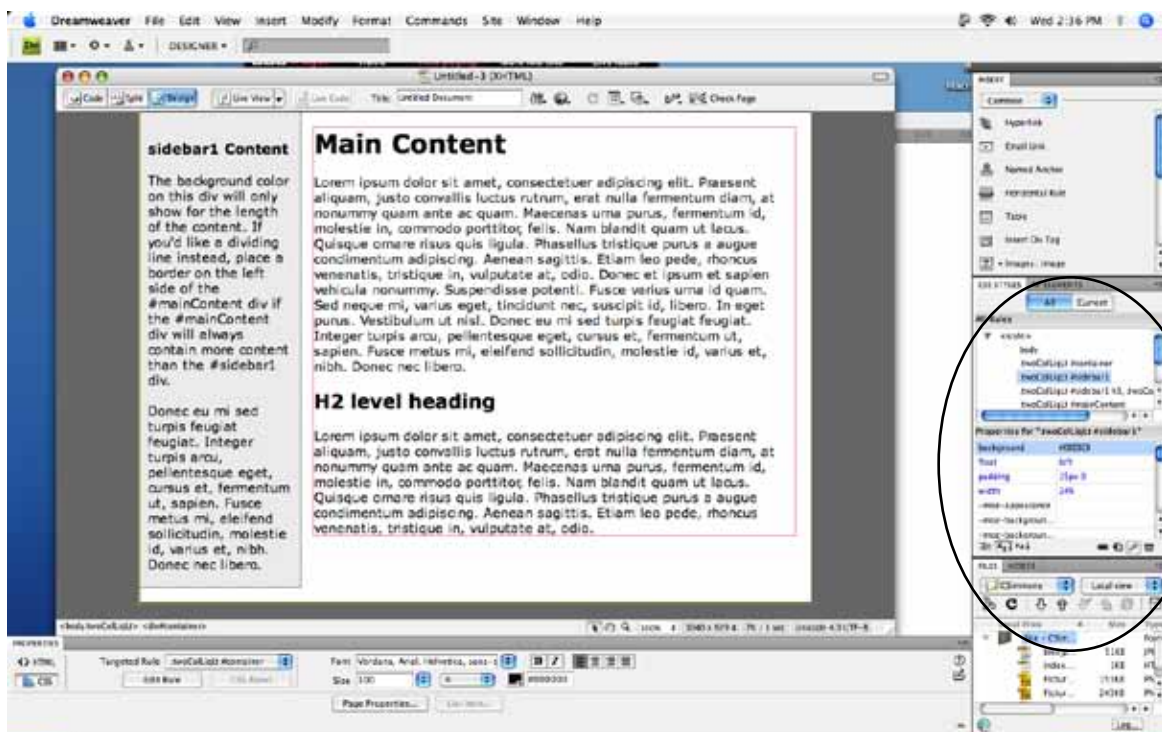
Now lets look at how you can make simple changes to the template.

## CHANGING THE LOOK OF THE LAYOUT

You can easily change the colors used in your layout. You'll just need to change the CSS properties of each area within your layout.

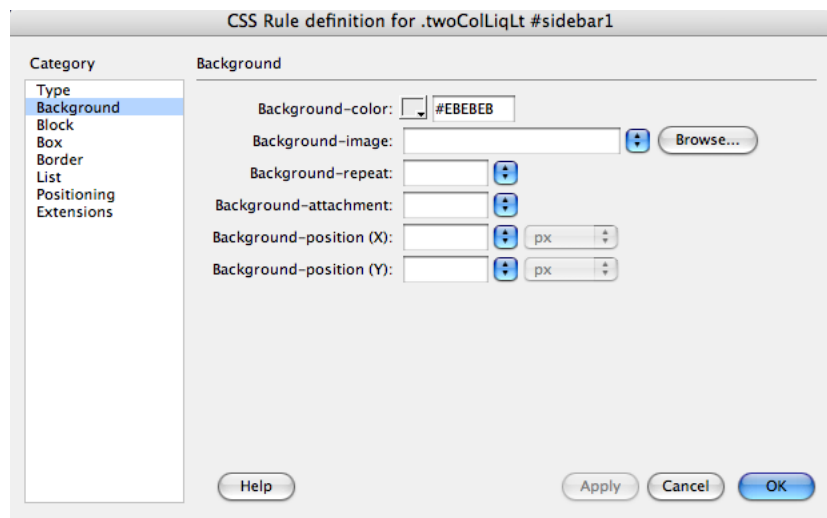
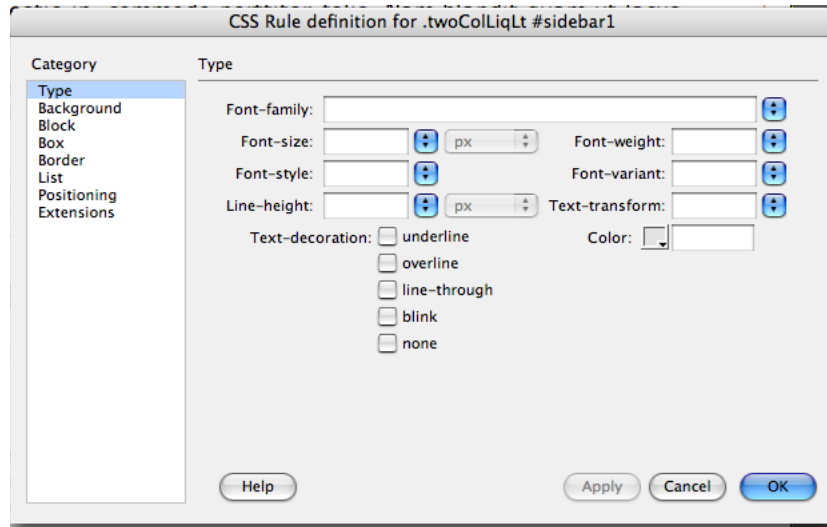
The headline at the top of each column tells you the name of that content area. For example, in the layout shown below the column on the right is called "sidebar1." To change the font color and background colors of that column you'll need to change the CSS properties for the "sidebar1" class.

To access the CSS properties of that area you'll need to use the CSS menu (if its not visible select "CSS" from the window menu). Within the menu, click on the right triangle next to the work "styles" to show the list of CSS styles/classes.



You'll see a list of all the different CSS styles used in the document. Scroll down until you find the style/class desired (in this case "sidebar1") - the style will have a # sign before the name of the area you want to change.

Highlight the desired class, then click on the edit button. The CSS editor will pop up, providing your will opportunity to set the type style (font, color, size) and background color, among other things.



Repeat the approve steps for each area you'd like to change. To change the back ground of the entire page select "body" from the CSS list.

# USING TABLES FOR LAYOUT

---

Uncomfortable with CSS or don't see they layout you'd like? You can still use tables to layout a page.

Simply divide up your page layout into rows and columns. Then start with a blank HTML page (no layout) and insert the needed tables. To learn more about tables see the Dreamweaver Guide "working With Tables."

