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Takeaway

CSS includes some innovative new properties for controlling page text; properties which were previously not accessible through standard HTML elements. These properties allow you to centralize control over the alignment, spacing, decoration, line height, and case of a page or text.

Text properties

CSS lets you exert tremendous control over the visual aspects of your Web pages, adjusting page height and width, background colors and images, borders, and typeface. None of these, however, are particularly new; all of these properties can just as easily be manipulated using standard HTML.

However, CSS also includes some innovative new properties for controlling page text; properties which were previously not accessible through standard HTML elements. These properties allow you to centralize control over the alignment, spacing, decoration, line height, and case of a page or text.

Controlling alignment

First up, the *text-align* property, which can be applied to block-level elements like paragraphs and headings. This property is used to control the horizontal alignment of the text block, and can take any of the values *left*, *right*, *center* or *justify*. Here's an example (**Listing A**):

Listing A

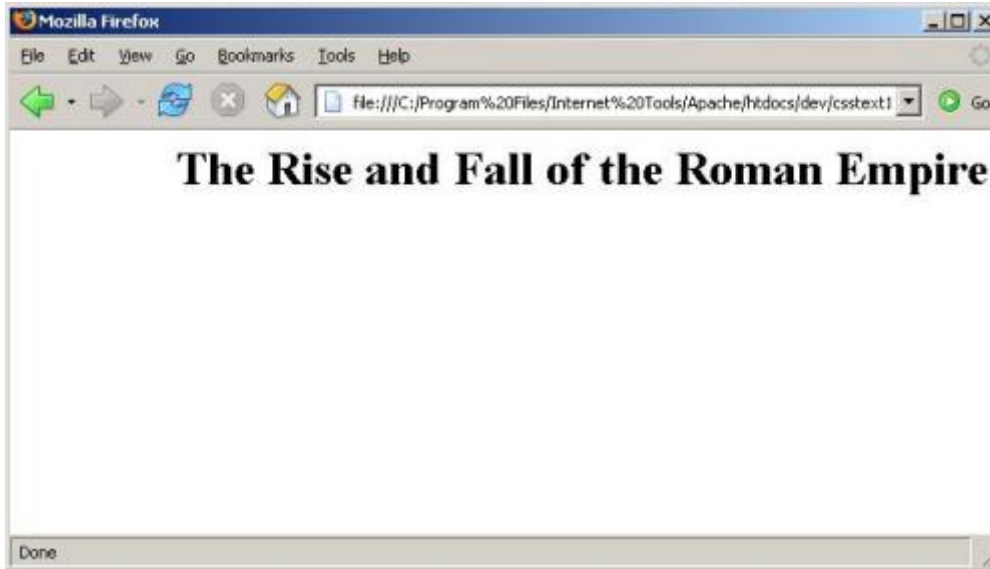
```
<html>
<head>
  <style type="text/css">
    .title {
      text-align: right;
    }
  </style>
</head>

<body>
  <h1 class="title">The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire</h1>
</body>
</html>
```

How do I: Control text properties with CSS?

And **Figure A** shows you the output:

Figure A



It's also possible to align an inline element with respect to the vertical axis, via the *vertical-align* property. This property accepts any of the values *baseline*, *top*, *text-top*, *middle*, *bottom*, *text-bottom*, all of which should be self-explanatory. Listing B shows you an example, which vertically aligns an image with the top of the subsequent text block:

Listing B

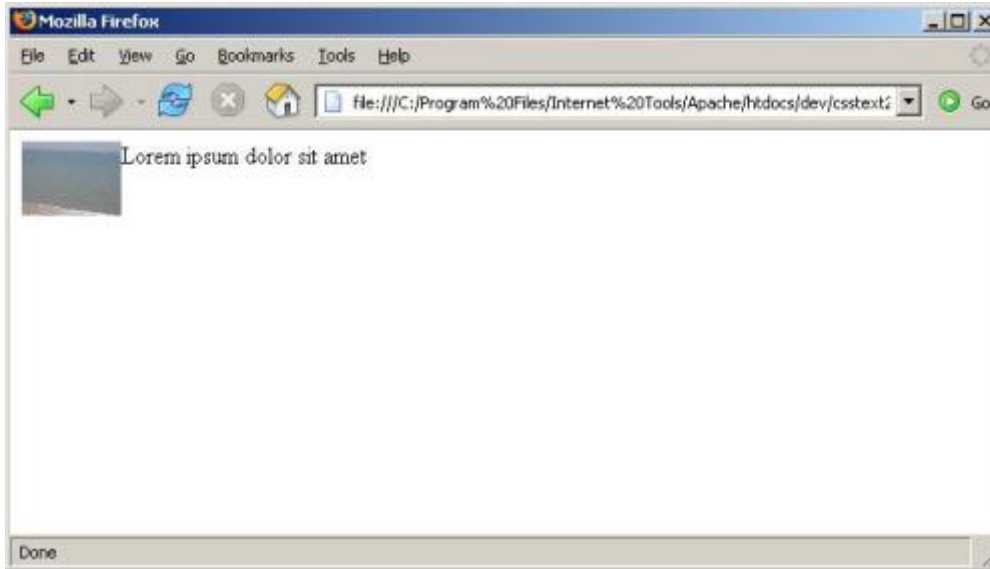
```
<html>
<head>
  <style type="text/css">
    .dummy {
      vertical-align: text-top;
    }
  </style>
</head>

<body>
  <p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit
amet</p>
</body>
</html>
```

How do I: Control text properties with CSS?

And the output is shown in **Figure B**.

Figure B



It's also possible to use the *vertical-align* property for subscripts and superscripts, by assigning it the values *sub* or *super* respectively (**Listing C**).

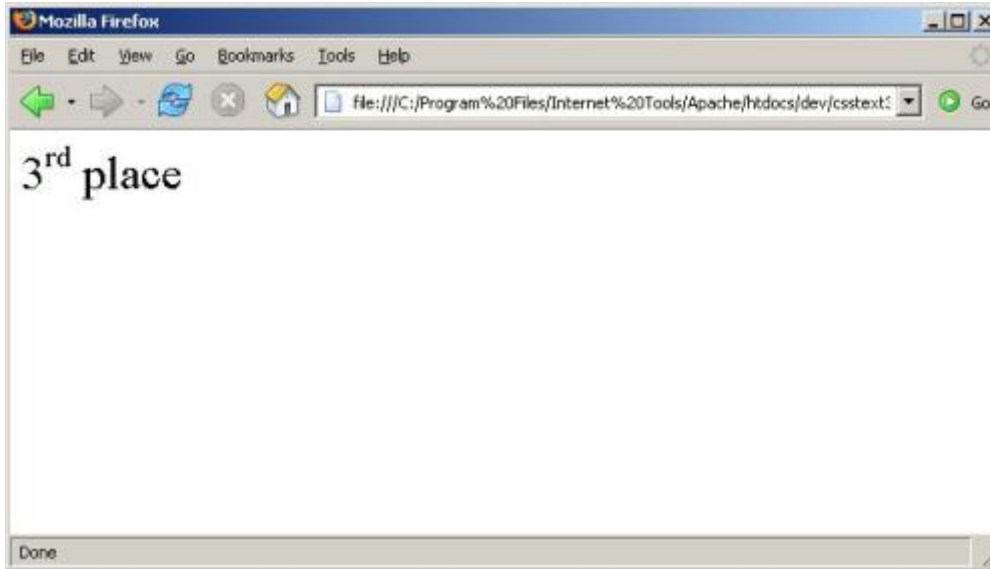
Listing C

```
<html>
<head>
  <style type="text/css">
    .super {
      font-size: x-small;
      vertical-align: super;
    }
  </style>
</head>

<body>
  3<span class="super">rd</span> place
</body>
</html>
```

And **Figure C** shows you the output:

Figure C



Controlling indentation

CSS also lets you control the amount of indentation the first line of a paragraph receives, via its *text-indent* property. Indentation units may be described in terms of points, percentages or ems. **Listing D** shows you an example which indents the first line of a paragraph by 25 percent of the paragraph width:

Listing D

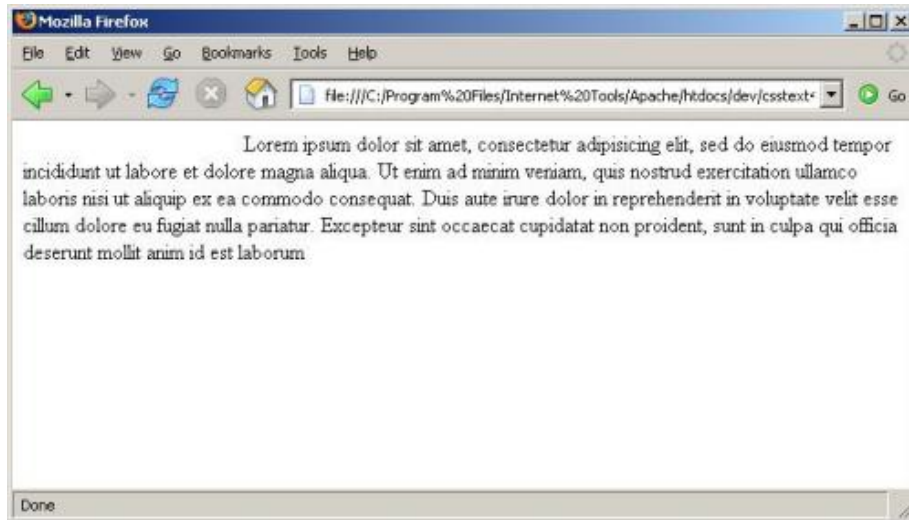
```
<html>
<head>
  <style type="text/css">
    p {
      text-indent: 25%;
    }
  </style>
</head>
```

```
<body>
  <p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit, sed do eiusmod
tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis
nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis
aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat
nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui
officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum</p>
</body>
</html>
```

How do I: Control text properties with CSS?

And the output is shown in **Figure D**.

Figure D



Controlling decoration

CSS lets you "decorate" text in order to make it more visible, via its *text-decoration* property. This decoration may be in the form of an underline, an overline, a strike-through or a blinking text object, corresponding to the CSS values *underline*, *overline*, *line-through* and *blink* respectively. **Listing E** demonstrates them all:

Listing E

```
<html>
<head>
  <style type="text/css">
    .alpha {
      text-decoration: underline;
    }

    .beta {
      text-decoration: overline;
    }

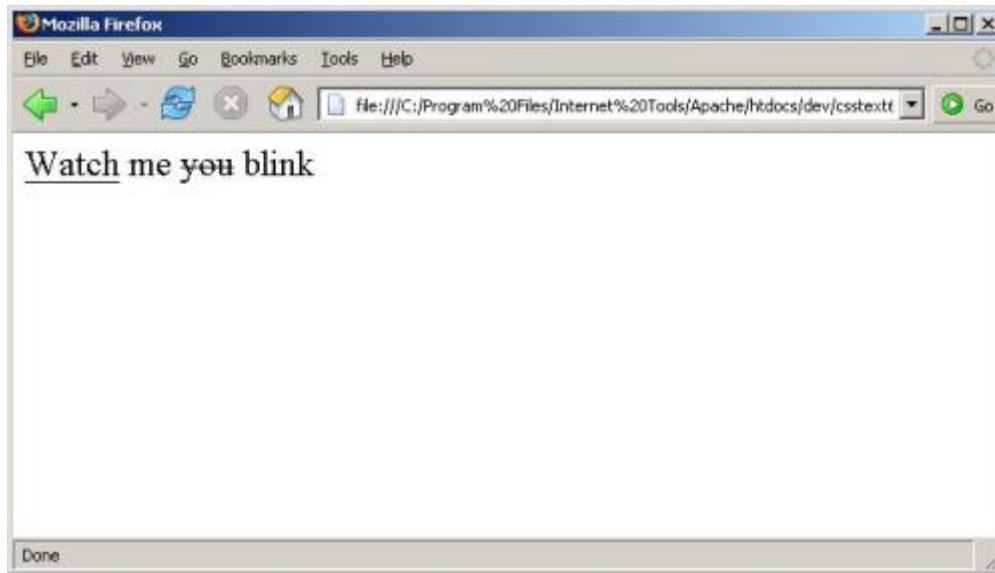
    .beta2 {
      text-decoration: line-through;
    }

    .gamma {
      text-decoration: blink;
    }
  </style>
</head>

<body>
  <span class="alpha">Watch</span>
  <span class="beta1">me</span>
  <span class="beta2">you</span>
  <span class="gamma">blink</span>
</body>
</html>
```

The output is shown in **Figure E**.

Figure E



A common use of this property is to eliminate the underlining of hyperlinks on Web pages and, optionally, to underline them only when the mouse pointer hovers over them. **Listing F** shows you how this can be done:

Listing F

```
<html>
<head>
  <style type="text/css">
    a {
      text-decoration: none
    }

    a:hover {
      text-decoration: underline;
    }
  </style>
</head>

<body>
Hello, and welcome to <a href="http://www.techrepublic.com">my site</a>.
</body>
</html>
```

Controlling case

CSS's *text-transform* property makes it simple to change the capitalization style of a block of text. The property accepts any one of the following values: *none*, *uppercase*, *lowercase*, *capitalize*. The first three should be self-explanatory; *capitalize* only capitalizes the first character of each word (**Listing G**).

Listing G

```
<html>
<head>
  <style type="text/css">
    p.uc {
      text-transform: uppercase;
    }

    p.wc {
      text-transform: capitalize;
    }

    p.lc {
      text-transform: lowercase;
    }
  </style>
</head>

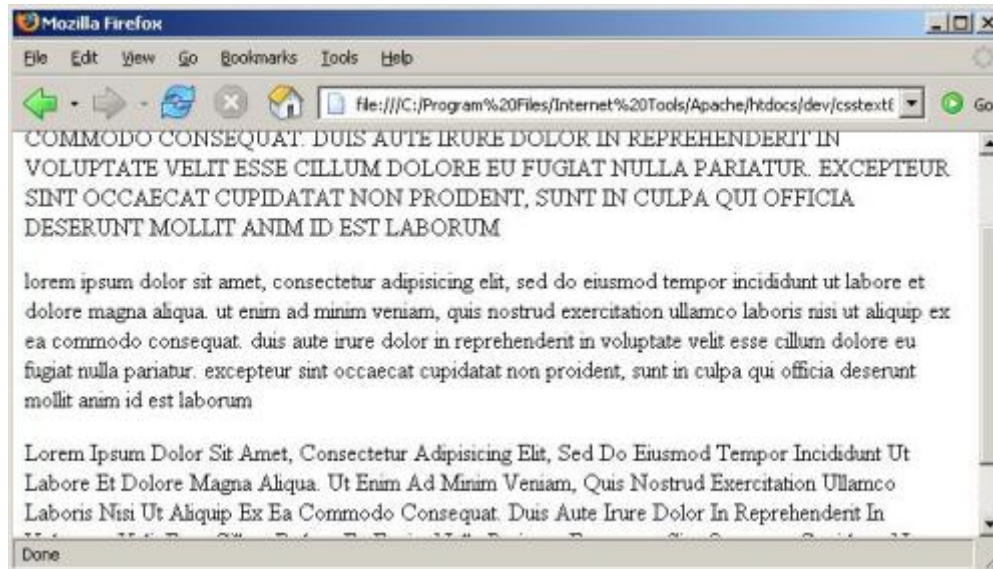
<body>
  <p class="uc">Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit, sed do
  eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim
  veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo
  consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum
  dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident,
  sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum</p>

  <p class="lc">Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit, sed do
  eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim
  veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo
  consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum
  dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident,
  sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum</p>

  <p class="wc">Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit, sed do
  eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim
  veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo
  consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum
  dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident,
  sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum</p>
</body>
</html>
```

Figure F shows you the output:

Figure F



Controlling spacing

CSS also makes it possible to control the space between words, characters and lines, via the corresponding *word-spacing*, *character-spacing* and *line-height* properties. As with the *text-indent* property, values may be expressed in points, pixels and ems. Here's an example which demonstrates (**Listing H**):

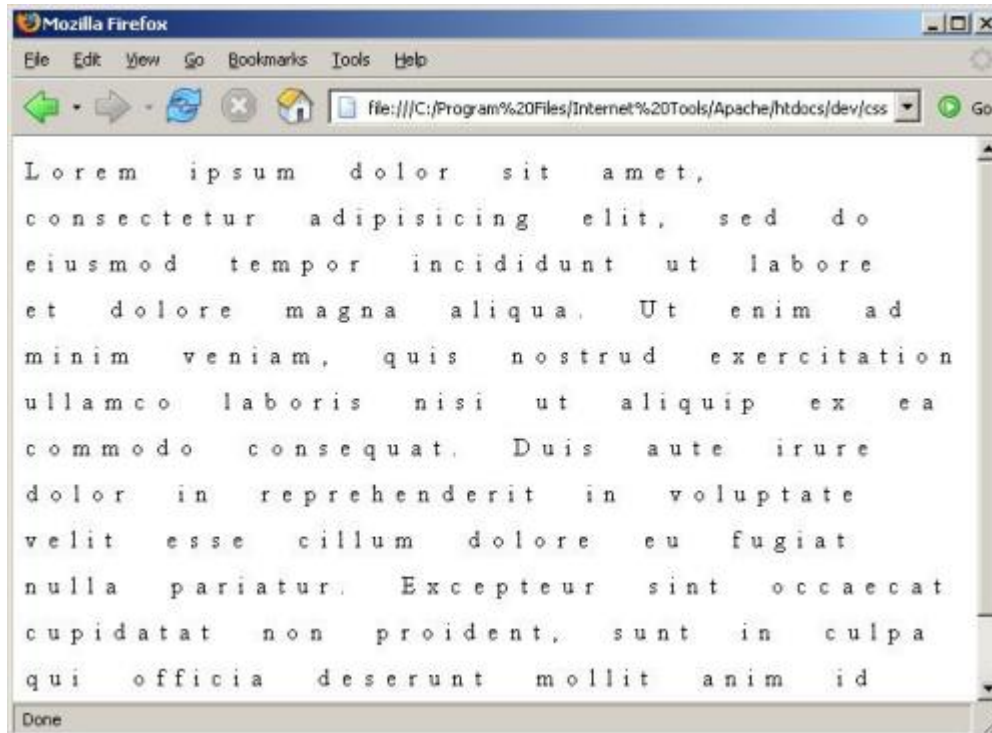
Listing H

```
<html>
<head>
  <style type="text/css">
    p {
      line-height: 30px;
      word-spacing: 12pt;
      letter-spacing: 0.5em;
    }
  </style>
</head>

<body>
  <p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit, sed do eiusmod
tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis
nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis
aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat
nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui
officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum</p>
</body>
</html>
```


And here's the output (**Figure G**):

Figure G



Of course, these examples are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to working with text properties in CSS. However, they should give you some insight into how these properties work in practice, and you should now know enough to begin experimenting on your own. So what are you waiting for? Get started -- and happy coding!

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