3.12 CSS Properties

For the remainder of this chapter, we'll focus on CSS properties. As you know from prior examples, a CSS property specifies one aspect of an HTML element's appearance. The W3C's CSS3 standard provides many CSS properties (more than a hundred), so there is great flexibility in terms of specifying appearances. Remembering all those properties and the types of values associated with them can be daunting. Unless you've got the memory of a sea lion,[3] you'll probably need to use a CSS reference and look things up every now and then.
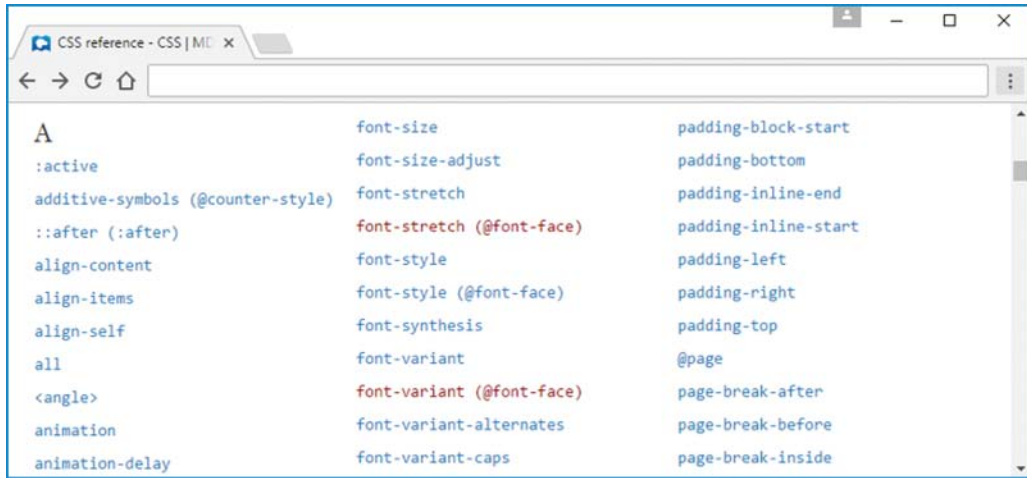
The W3C and the WHATWG have CSS references, but, unfortunately, they're rather disjointed, which can make them difficult to navigate. The Mozilla Developer Network has a more user-friendly CSS reference at https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/CSS /Reference. Take a look at **FIGURE 3.12**, which shows the keyword index part of the reference. Keywords are the words that form the syntax of a language, so the figure's keyword index shows the words that form the CSS language. Note the first keyword entry, `:active`. The keywords that start with a colon are known as pseudo-elements (we'll describe a few of them in later chapters). The non-colonated[4] words are properties. To get details on any of the keywords, click on the keyword. Time for a short field trip: Go to Mozilla's CSS reference and click on the `font-size` property. That takes you to a page with details about the `font-size` property.

We'll discuss quite a few of the CSS properties later in the book, but for this chapter, we'll limit our discussion to the properties shown in **FIGURE 3.13**. Those properties fall into five property groups—color, font, text, border, and margin/padding. We'll discuss the properties in those groups in the upcoming sections.

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[3] James Randerson, "Sea Lion Scores Top for Memory," *New Scientist*, October 23, 2003, https://www .newscientist.com/article/dn2960-sea-lion-scores-top-for-memory.

[4] "Colonated" isn't a word, but it should be. When the *Oxford English Dictionary* folks get around to approving my word submission, colonated will mean "something that has a colon."

FIGURE 3.12 Mozilla's CSS properties reference

Color properties	`color, background color`
Font properties	`font-style, font-variant, font-weight, font-size, font-family, font`
Text properties	`line-height, text-align, text-decoration, text-transform, text-indent`
Border properties	`border-bottom, border-bottom-color, ...`
Margin and padding properties	`margin-bottom, margin-left, ...` `padding-bottom, padding-left, ...`

FIGURE 3.13 CSS properties introduced in this chapter

Note: Ellipses are used here because there are too many border, margin, and padding properties to show in this figure.

3.13 Color Properties

In Figure 3.13, you can see two color properties—`color` and `background-color`. The `color` property specifies the color of an element's text. The `background-color` property specifies the background color of an element. The color properties are pretty straightforward, right? It's the *values* for the color properties that require more attention.

There's quite a bit of flexibility when it comes to specifying color values. You can specify a color value using one of five different formats. We'll describe the formats in detail, but first, here's a teaser of what you can look forward to:

color name—for example, red
RGB value—specifies amounts of red, green, and blue

RGBA value—specifies red, green, and blue, plus amount of opacity

HSL value—specifies amounts of hue, saturation, and lightness

HSLA value—specifies hue, saturation, and lightness, plus amount of opacity

Color Names

The CSS3 specification defines 147 color names, and the major browsers support all those colors. To view the color names and their associated colors, go to https://www.w3.org/TR/css3-color/#svg-color. On that web page, you should recognize a few of the color names, like `orange` and `darkorange`, from previous web page examples in this book. An example of a more obscure color name is `darkslategray`. Note how we use `darkslategray` in this code fragment's class selector rule:

```
<head>
<style>
  .roofColor {color: darkslategray;}
</style>
</head>
                         color name

<body>
<p>
  Mackay Hall's roof is
  <span class="roofColor">dark slate gray</span>.
</p>
</body>
```