

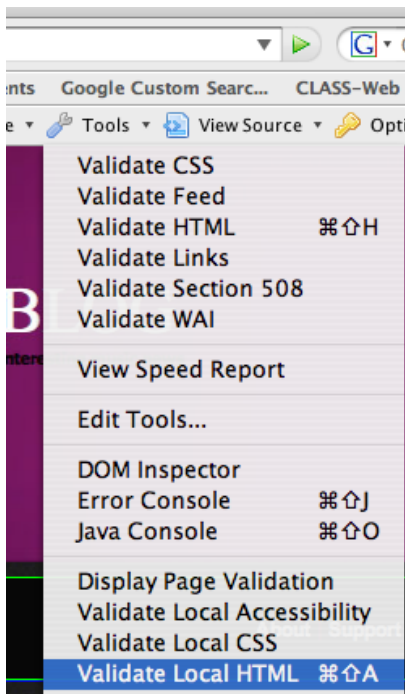
Basic Trouble Shooting

Validating Your HTML Document

One of the first things you should do once you start having problems laying out your html is to validate your html code. Errors and mistakes can occur all too easily. Either working in the code and changing something incorrectly, and even more in the Design View if you are not careful. Common mistakes are: missing closing tag `</p>`, or an uncompleted tag `</p`. There are others but those tend to be the most common with students.

The Firefox [Web Developer toolbar](#) includes a variety of ways to help troubleshoot your document. It also includes a very handy page validator that connects directly to the W3C (*World Wide Web Consortium*), who are directly responsible for creating and maintaing web standards.

To use this tool bar while viewing your page in Firefox:



Go to > Tools > Validate Local HTML

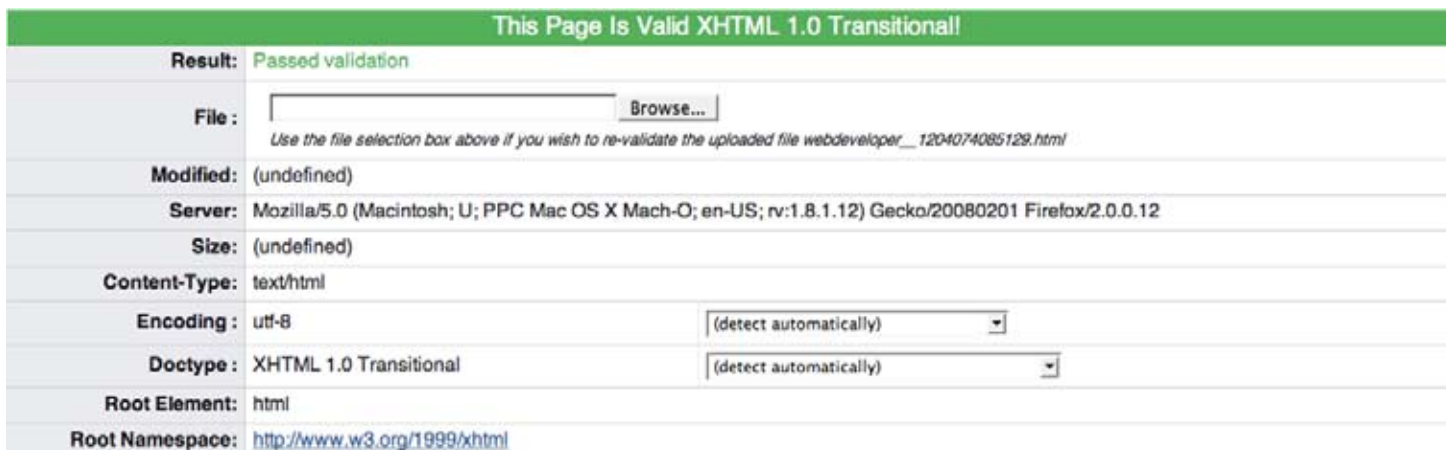
Unless your file is being viewed online from a web host this would be the option you want to choose.

NOTE :: Do not confuse the tools in the Developer toolbar with the Firefox tools.

After selecting to validate your page, Firefox will OPEN A NEW TAB for you and display the results from the [W3C Validation Service](#)

Results

If your results come back as green and Valid then you can move on to troubleshoot your css.



If your results comeback as red, then you need to correct the errors until your page validates. Page validation seems to be a factor in about half the problems I find when someone is having a problem getting their page to work, even more so when do cross-browser checking.

This page is not Valid HTML 4.01 Transitional!	
Result:	Failed validation, 29 Errors
Address :	<input type="text" value="http://www.microsoft.com/en/us/default.aspx"/>
Modified:	(undefined)
Server:	Microsoft-IIS/7.0
Size:	40391
Content-Type:	text/html
Encoding :	utf-8 <input type="text" value="(detect automatically)"/>
Doctype :	HTML 4.01 Transitional <input type="text" value="(detect automatically)"/>
Root Element:	html
Root Namespace:	http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml

The great feature of validating your page this way is that the W3C provides feedback and extra information about the error, how to fix it, and what line of code it occurred on.

Validation Output: 29 Errors

Line 1, Column 134: there is no attribute "XMLNS".

```
...dtd"><html lang="en" dir="ltr" xmlns = "http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml"><head><K
```

You have used the attribute named above in your document, but the document type you are using does not support that attribute for this element. This error is often caused by incorrect use of the "Strict" document type with a document that uses frames (e.g. you must use the "Transitional" document type to get the "target" attribute), or by using vendor proprietary extensions such as "marginheight" (this is usually fixed by using CSS to achieve the desired effect instead).

This error may also result if the element itself is not supported in the document type you are using, as an undefined element will have no supported attributes; in this case, see the element-undefined error message for further information.

How to fix: check the spelling and case of the element and attribute, (Remember XHTML is all lower-case) and/or check that they are both allowed in the chosen document type, and/or use CSS instead of this attribute. If you received this error when using the <embed> element to incorporate flash media in a Web page, see the [FAQ item on valid flash](#).

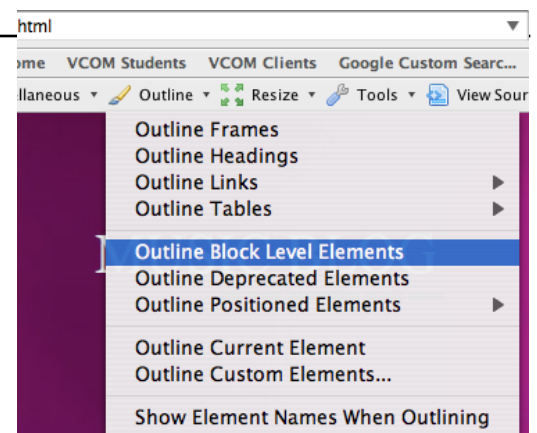
If you get the message that it is unable to validate, check to make sure you have a doc type specified. Your document must always have a Doc type declaration at the top of your document. If not this can cause problems with accesibility, and inconsistencies in browsers. There are a few different document types out there, but the most accepted are XHTML Transitional, and XHTML Strict. The preffered one to use is strict.

```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Strict//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-strict.dtd">
```

Troubleshooting the Layout

Another handy tool that the Web Developer toolbar offers is the ability to see outlines of the different structural elements of your page highlighted in different colors.

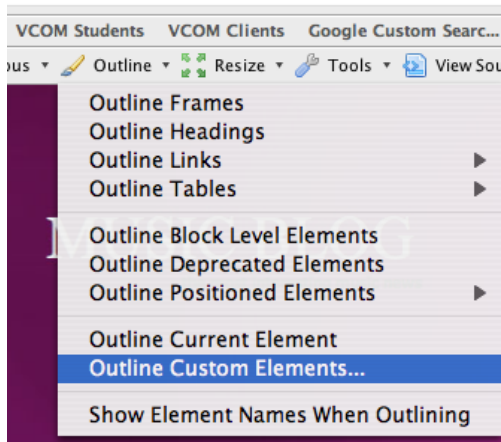
To do this Go To > Outline > Block Level Elements.



Your page should then look something like this.

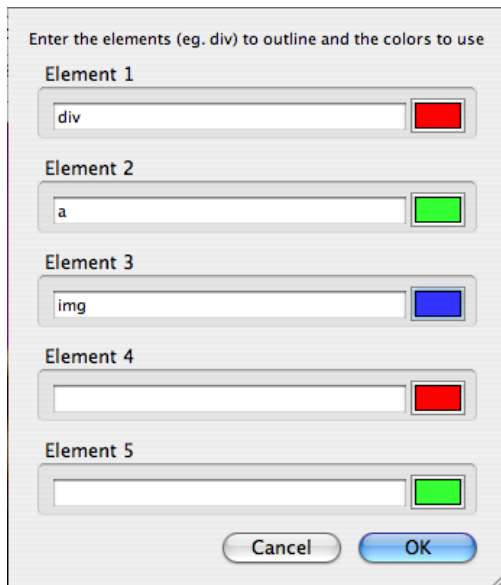
Where by Blue is outlining your div tags, Green is outlining , and Red outlines paragraphs and headings.

You'll notice that this does not outline everything. If there is an element you wish to outline so you can see where it begins and ends, there is an option to outline custom elements.

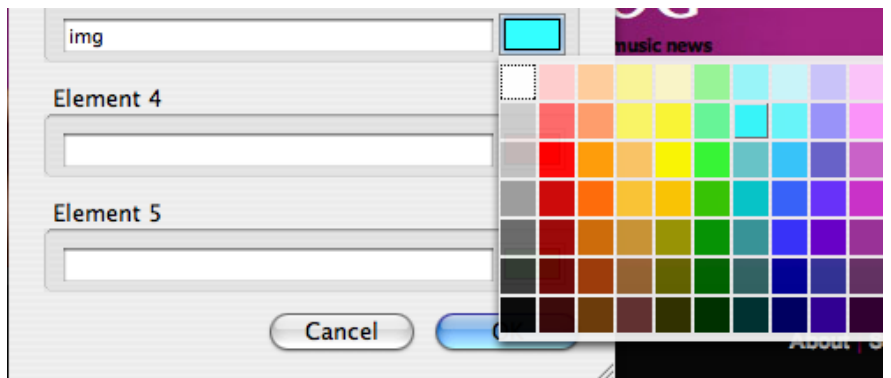


It is located in the category under > Outline > Outline Custom Elements.

Here in the following dialog box, you can type in the name of the element, as it is spelled in the html, to highlight it (i.e. `img` for an image).



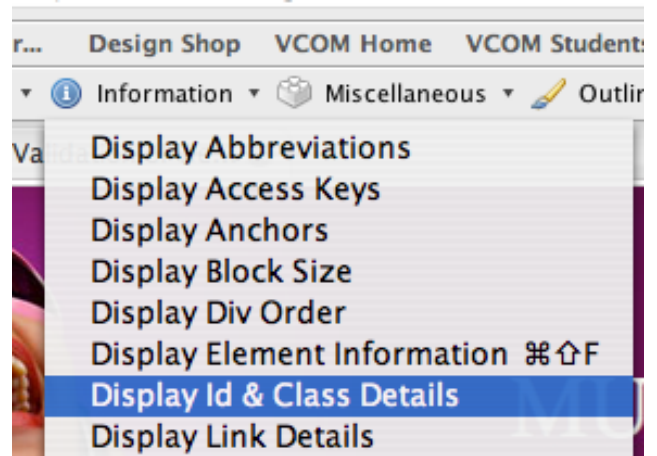
There are only three color though. By clicking on the color you can select the one of your choice so that it stands out more against your design or the other highlight colors.



But even though you see an outline, you do not know the exact name of element being outlined. In somecase you might want to know the name of something.

To do this, Go to > Information > ID and Class Details.

Now you will be able to see the outlines, AND any ID or class name that is in your document.



Trouble Shooting Your CSS

So you have a valid html document and you need to find out where the heck your css is going wrong. First thing to do is **focus on one thing at a time** and work your way through the problems individually.

Sometimes you might have fixed something, moved on to the next problem, and after fixing the new one, something goes wrong with what you had previously just fixed. This can happen sometimes. So start with the problems that happen closest to the top of your html document first.

Things To Out Look For:

- » Are you using padding? Avoid padding on the left and the right. *NOTE: Padding is ok to use on something on any side IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A WIDTH AND/OR HEIGHT SET for it, such as paragraphs. Most of the time you should not need to set a width for paragraphs.*
- » Are you using floats? A lot? Floats can be very useful but can get out of hand sometimes. Try to set up your document without floats. So you only rely on the document flow and use floats when needed (i.e to wrap text, create columns, or line things up next to each other that normally are not.
- » Are you using positioning? If you start using too much positioning it can get very confusing very quickly. Do you need to use positioning? If there is a way to do what you are trying to do with out positioning, try that first. Utilize the documents natural flow as much as possible.
- » Have you done any hand coding or editing the css directly (cut or paste). If so check your css by validating your css in the same fashion as you did your html. It is located right above the option to validate your html.
- » Are you naming your css selectors correctly? If you want to change each item in a list, use the 'li' in your selector and not 'ul', etc.

So I've done all that and it still isn't correct

Your html and css validate. You've tried different approaches with your css in getting it to work but something still is not right. Ask yourself questions about what you are trying to do, give yourself answers, and check if you did your answer (and correctly).

Check your html structure. This is always the first place to look when troubleshooting. The order and placement of where you have put elements in your document affect your documents flow. Which is utilized by css. Things I tend to see are:

- » Divs are located in the wrong place. EXAMPLE :: A navigation list should be living inside the header div, but working through the design view, was mistakenly put after the header div and before a content div.
- » Content is located in the wrong place.
- » Divs that are living OUTSIDE of the wrapper