How to create and edit a CSS rule

You can create and edit a CSS rule in two locations: the Properties panel and the CSS Styles panel. When you apply CSS styles to text by using the Properties panel or menu commands, CSS rules are embedded in the head of the current document. You can also use the CSS Styles panel to create and edit CSS rules and properties.

In this guide, you review CSS rules, create and apply a class-style CSS rule by using the Properties panel, and modify an HTML tag-style rule by using the CSS Styles panel.

About CSS rules

A CSS formatting rule consists of two parts: the selector and the declaration (or in most cases, a block of declarations). The *selector* is a term (such as p, h1, a class name, or an id) that identifies the formatted element. The *declaration* block defines the style properties. In the following example, h1 (a heading tag) is the selector, and everything that falls between the braces ({ and }) is the declaration block (defining the properties of the h1 heading):

```
h1 {
font-family: Georgia, "Times New Roman", Times, serif;
font-size: 18px;
text-transform: uppercase;
color: #090;
}
```

An individual declaration consists of two parts: the *property* (such as font family) and *value* (such as Georgia). In the previous CSS rule, a particular style has been created for h1 tags; the text for all h1 tags linked to this style will be 18 pixels in size, Georgia font, uppercase, and bright green (hex value #090).

The style (which comes from a rule, or a collection of rules) resides in a place separate from the actual text it's formatting—usually in an external style sheet or in the head section of an HTML document. Thus, one rule for h1 tags can apply to many tags at once (and in the case of external style sheets, the rule can apply to many tags at once on many different pages) (**Figure 1**). In this way, CSS provides extremely easy update capability. When you update a CSS rule in one place, the formatting of all the elements that use the defined style is automatically updated to the new style.
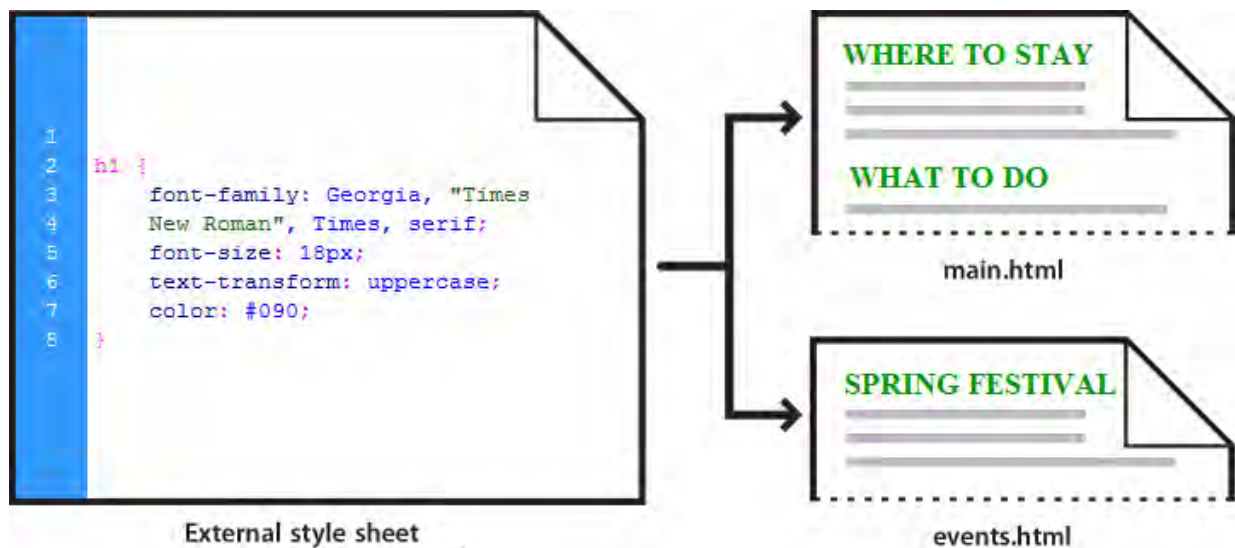

Figure 1 Updating a CSS rule in one place updates all elements

There are three main types of CSS:

Class style: Similar to the styles you use in word processing and page layout programs. For example, you may want to format all body text in 10-point, Arial, dark green type. You can create a class style with these attributes and then apply this style to all body text in your website. Class names must begin with a period and can contain any combination of letters and numbers (for example, .myhead1).

HTML tag style: Applies global formatting to individual HTML tags rather than to individual selections. Suppose you want to modify the Heading 1 paragraph style to appear always in purple text. Instead of creating a class style and applying it to every heading in the document, you can create an HTML tag style with these attributes and apply it to the Heading 1 `<h1>` tag. In effect, you are redefining the HTML tag.

ID style: A unique identifier (ID) for a style applied to headers, banners, menus, and other elements present in only one location in the document. Used once within a document or page. IDs must begin with a pound (#) sign and can contain any combination of letters and numbers (for example, #myID1).

CSS rules can reside in the following locations:

Internal (or embedded) CSS style sheets are collections of CSS rules included in a style tag in the head section of an HTML document.

External CSS style sheets are collections of CSS rules stored in a separate, external CSS (.css) file (not an HTML file). You link this file to one or more pages in a website with a link or an @import rule in the head section of a document.

Creating a new CSS rule from the Properties panel

In the CSS Properties panel, you can access Targeted Rules and create new ones (**Figure 2**). A *Targeted Rule* is a rule you are editing in the CSS Properties panel. When you have an existing style applied to text, the rule affecting the text's format appears when you click inside the text on the page. You can also use the Targeted Rule pop-up menu to create new CSS rules and new in-line styles or apply existing classes to selected text.
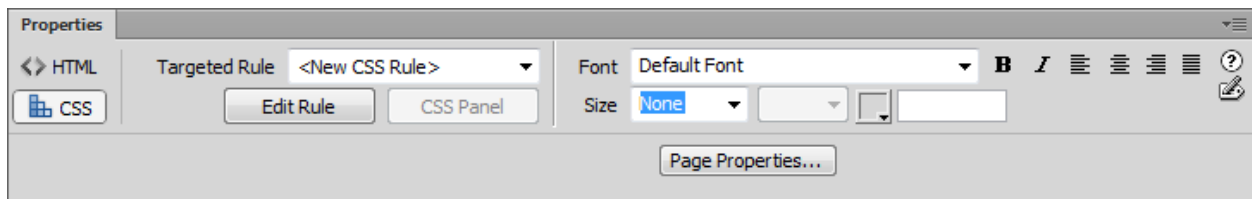

Figure 2 Properties panel, CSS mode

How you edit your CSS depends on selection level. To access rules that apply to a current selection only, you can use the Targeted Rule pop-up menu in the CSS Properties panel. To access all CSS rules for a page, you can use the CSS Styles panel. The CSS Styles panel will be reviewed in the next guide.

In this section, you use the Properties panel to create a simple CSS class-style rule to format a block of text.

To create a new CSS rule in the Properties panel:

1. Start Dreamweaver.

2. Select File > New to create a new document.

   The New Document dialog box appears (**Figure 3**).

3. In the Blank Page category of the New Document dialog box, select HTML Page Type to create a plain HTML page.

4. In the Layout column, select None.

5. Click the Create button.

   The new HTML page opens.

6. In the Document toolbar, click the Show Code And Design Views (Split) button (**Figure 4**).

   Being able to view the code that Dreamweaver generates for creating styles will be useful to help you understand and write your own CSS syntax later on.

7. Type some text or paste text copied in another application in the Design view Document window.

8. Press Enter (Windows) or Return (Mac OS) to create a new paragraph and add additional text.

9. Open the Properties panel (Window > Properties), if it isn't already open, and click the CSS button to display the CSS Properties panel (**Figure 2**).

10. Use the Font menu to change the Font to Georgia, Times New Roman, Times, Serif (**Figure 5**).

    The New CSS Rule dialog box appears (**Figure 6**).

    Note: It is a good practice to assign a font combination instead of a single font. This ensures that most page visitors will view page text the same way. A browser uses the first font in the combination that is installed in the visitor's system. If none of the fonts in the combination is installed, the browser displays the text as specified by the visitor's browser preferences.
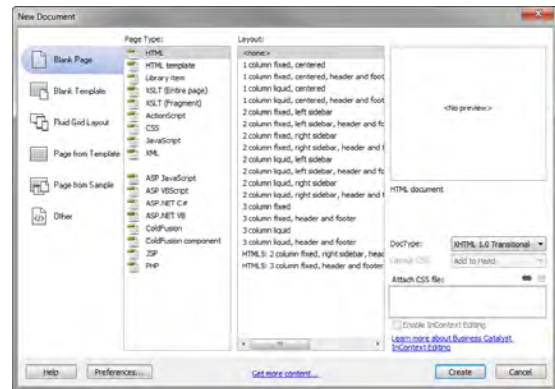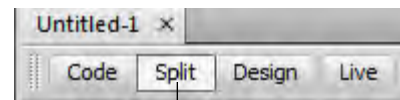

Figure 3 New Document dialog box

Show Code And Design Views button
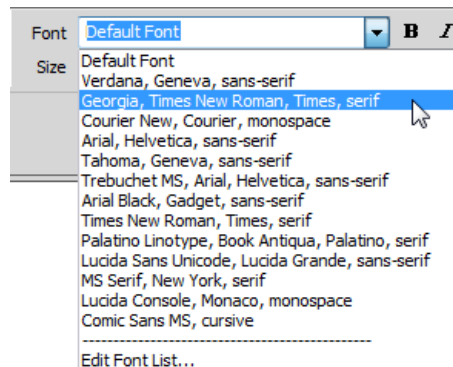
Figure 4 Document window view options

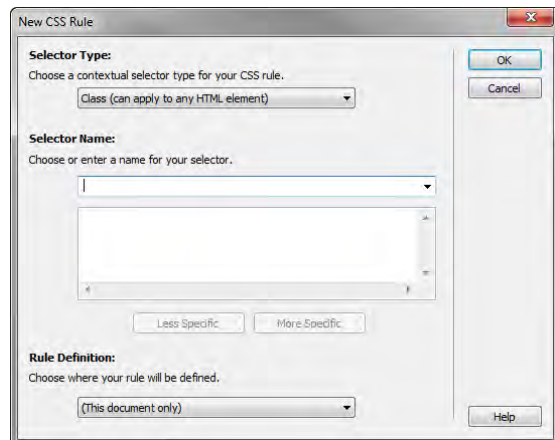**Figure 5** Properties panel Font menu

Figure 6 New CSS Rule dialog box

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11. In the Selector Type menu, select Class (Can Apply To Any HTML Element) (**Figure 7**).

12. Click in the Selector Name text box and type **.myStyle** (**Figure 8**).

   Note: CSS rules must begin with a period and cannot contain spaces or special characters.

13. In the Rule Definition menu, select (This Document Only) (**Figure 9**).

   This tells Dreamweaver to create and store the CSS (style sheet) in the current document only. The new style will not be available for use in other documents.

   To create an external CSS document for your entire website, you would choose (New Style Sheet File). This is discussed in a later guide.

14. Click OK to close the New CSS Rule dialog box.

   The new font is applied to the paragraph that contains the insertion point. The name of the style appears in the Targeted Rule box in the Properties panel (**Figure 10**).

   Note: Because you didn't select a specific word or character, you can continue to define this rule by applying additional formatting.

15. In the Properties panel, change the size to **18**.

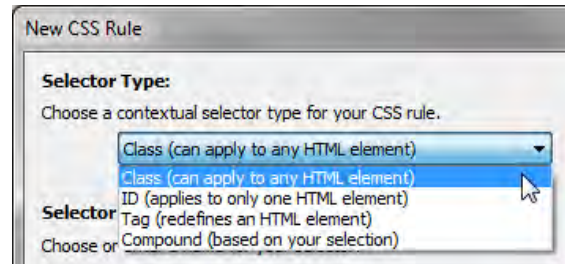   The font size in the paragraph that contains the insertion point changes accordingly.

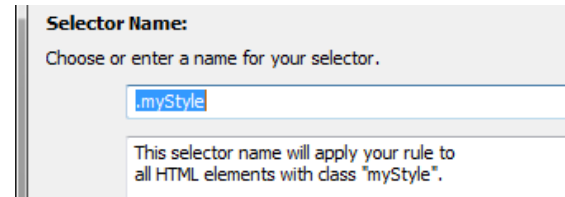**Figure 7** New CSS Rule dialog box, Selector Type options

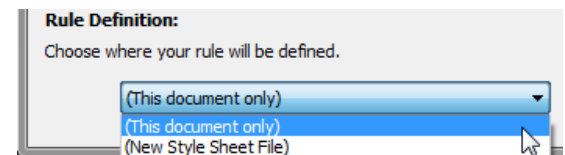**Figure 8** New CSS Rule dialog box, Selector Name options

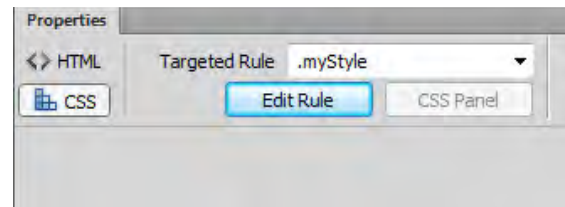**Figure 9** New CSS Rule dialog box, Rule Definition options

Figure 10 Targeted Rule in the Properties panel

16. Click the Color box in the Properties panel and select a new color for the text.

The Properties panel shows the targeted rule (.myStyle) and its formatting. The targeted rule is applied to the paragraph that contains the insertion point (**Figure 11**).

You can use this CSS rule to format additional text in your document.

Observe in Code view that Dreamweaver stores styles created with CSS directly in the head section of the document (**Figure 12**).

Ocean View High School is dedicated to academic excellence. We offer a highly successful preparation for college and an impressive breadth of extracurriculaer activities including both athletics and the arts.

Ocean View is a technology-driven school where many of our classrooms contain computers for each student and coursework is enhanced by the use of a variety of technologies.

Figure 11 Formatted paragraph text

```
<head>
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type"
content="text/html; charset=utf-8" />
<title>Untitled Document</title>
<style type="text/css">
.myStyle {
    font-family: Georgia, "Times New
    Roman", Times, serif;
    font-size: 18px;
    color: #090;
}
</style>
</head>
```

Figure 12 Detail of new CSS rule, Code view

Applying CSS styles

After you create a CSS rule, you can use it to give your entire document or website a consistent appearance. You can apply a CSS rule to text by using the Properties panel.

To apply a CSS style:

1. Click anywhere in the paragraph that doesn't have the new CSS style.

2. In the Properties panel, select myStyle (the new CSS rule you just created) from the Targeted Rule menu (**Figure 13**).

   The new style is applied to the other paragraph (**Figure 14**).

   Note: If you edit the CSS style, both paragraphs will be updated automatically and consistently. You will learn more about creating and modifying CSS in a later guide.
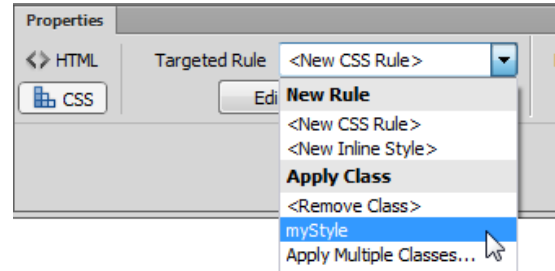

Figure 13 Targeted Rule menu

Figure 14 CSS style applied to both paragraphs

Using the CSS Styles panel

In the CSS Styles panel you can track the CSS rules and properties affecting a currently selected page element (Current mode) or all of the rules and properties available to the document (All mode). A button at the top of the panel enables you to switch between the two modes. You can also use the CSS Styles panel to modify CSS properties in both All and Current modes.

The CSS Styles panel in Current mode

In Current mode, the CSS Styles panel displays three panes: a Summary For Selection pane that displays the CSS properties for the current selection in the document, a Rules pane that displays the location of selected properties (or a cascade of rules for the selected tag, depending on your selection), and a Properties pane where you can edit CSS properties for the rule applied to the selection (**Figure 15**).
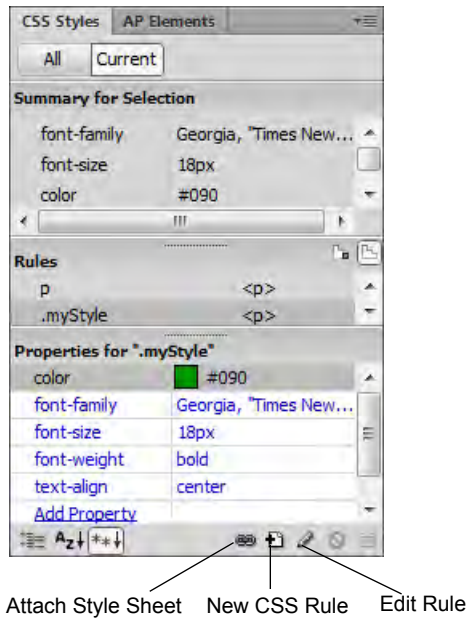
Figure 15 CSS Styles panel, Current mode

The CSS Styles panel in All mode

In All mode, the CSS Styles panel displays two panes: an All Rules pane, and a Properties pane. The All Rules pane displays a list of rules defined in the current document as well as all rules defined in style sheets attached to the current document. You can use the Properties pane to edit CSS properties for any rule selected in the All Rules pane (**Figure 16**).
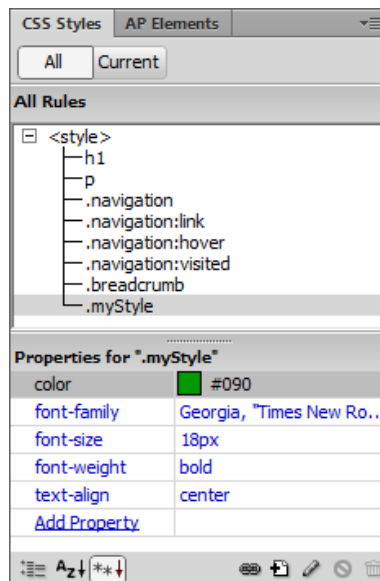
Figure 16 CSS Styles panel, All mode

To add a CSS rule by using the CSS Styles panel:

1. Start Dreamweaver.

2. Create a new HTML document.

3. Save and name the Dreamweaver document.

4. Type some text in the document. Make sure no formatting is applied to the text (**Figure 17**).

5. Make sure the CSS Styles panel is open.

    If it is not, select Window > CSS Styles.

6. To create a new style, click the New CSS Rule button (+) at the bottom of the panel (**Figure 15**).

    The New CSS Rule dialog box appears (**Figure 18**).

7. In the Selector Type pop-up menu, select Class.

    This option creates a new Class rule.

8. In the Selector Name text box, type a name for the style such as **.warning**.

    Note: Class rule names must begin with a period and cannot contain spaces or special characters. If you forget to type the period, Dreamweaver adds this automatically.

9. In the Rule Definition pop-up menu, select (This Document Only) or (New Style Sheet File).

    The option (This Document Only) defines the style as part of the document's internal style sheet. The option (New Style Sheet File) defines the style as part of an external style sheet.

    Note: If you choose to create an external style sheet by selecting (New Style Sheet File), you are prompted to select a location for the new style sheet (.css) document.

10. Click OK.

    The CSS Rule Definition dialog box appears (**Figure 19**).

11. Select options for Type, such as the following:

    •   Select Arial, Helvetica, Sans-serif in the Font-Family pop-up menu

    •   Select 12 from the Font-Size pop-up menu, and select px (pixels) for the measurement unit.

    •   Type **#CC0033** in the Color text box, or select a color in the color picker.

Figure 17 Text with no formatting applied

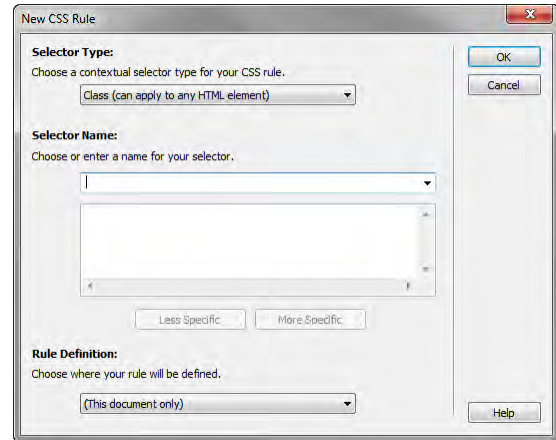**Figure 18** New CSS Rule dialog box
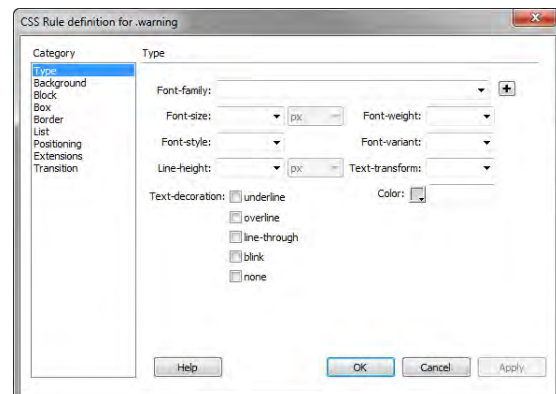

Figure 19 CSS Rule Definition dialog box, Type options

12. To change the formatting of text blocks, select Block in the Category pane.

The Block category of the CSS Rule Definition dialog box opens (**Figure 20**).

13. In the Letter-Spacing text box, you can make changes such as typing **3** and selecting pixels for the measurement unit.

This setting adds space between letters.

14. In the Text-Indent box, you can make changes such as typing **5** and selecting pixels for the measurement unit.

15. Click OK.

The CSS Rule Definition dialog box closes.

16. Select the document text.

17. Make sure the Properties panel is open and the HTML option is selected.

The Properties panel is docked at the bottom of the screen. If it is not open, select Window > Properties.

18. Select warning, or the name of your style, from the Class pop-up menu (**Figure 21**).

19. In the document, deselect the text by positioning the mouse pointer next to it and clicking once.

Observe that the format of the text has changed (**Figure 22**).

20. Make sure the CSS Styles panel is open.

If it is not, select Window > CSS Styles.

21. Make sure All is selected in the CSS Styles panel. If no styles are listed under <style> in the All Rules pane, click the plus (+) symbol (Windows) or the disclosure triangle (Mac OS).

Observe that the newly created CSS rule now appears under <style> in the All Rules pane, indicating the new rule is part of a CSS style sheet. Also observe that if you select the style name in the All Rules pane, properties for the style appear in the Properties pane.
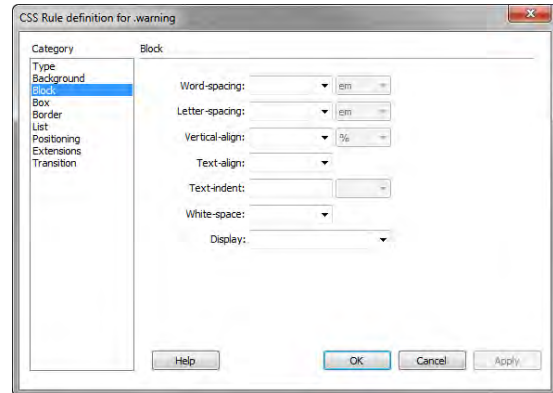

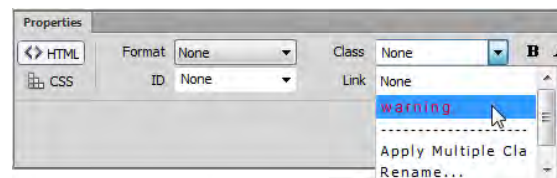**Figure 20** CSS Rule Definition dialog box, Block options

Figure 21 Text Properties panel

Figure 22 Formatting applied to text

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Edit styles

After you create styles, you can still make changes to them by using the Edit Rule button.

To edit styles:

1. To view a style sheet's rules, click the plus symbol (Windows) or disclosure triangle (Mac OS) beside <style> in the All Rules pane of the CSS Styles panel.

    Dreamweaver displays the style sheet's rules (**Figure 23**).

2. Select the rule or style you want to edit.

3. At the bottom of the CSS Styles panel, click the Edit Rule button.

    The CSS Rule Definition dialog box for the selected style appears (**Figure 24**).

4. Make formatting changes in the CSS Rule Definition dialog box. Then click OK.

    The changes take effect immediately.

    If you are editing an external style sheet, the same changes are applied to any other documents attached to this style sheet.
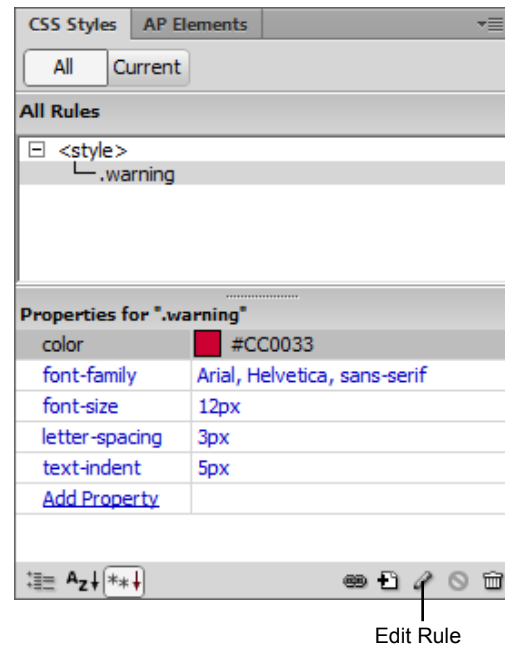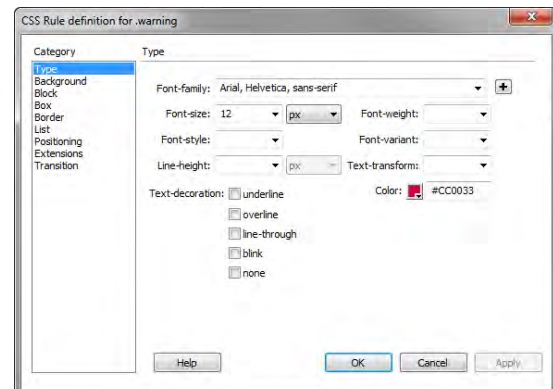
Figure 23 CSS Styles panel

Figure 24 CSS Rule Definition dialog box