

Class 7: Designing a Website's Theme

- Course Feedback
- Designing a website's theme
 - Color
 - Imagery
 - Typography
 - Shape
 - Alignment
- CSS Class Selector

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Course Feedback: What's Working Well

- Interactive classroom
- Note-taking handouts
- Detailed notes

Course Feedback: What's Needs Improvement

- Wi-Fi in the classroom
- More practice for the Friday quizzes
- Less preparation, less homework, less practice quizzes, etc.
- Not enough office hours
- Due dates in Canvas, not course website
- Tentative schedule of assignments, etc.
- Insufficient note-taking space on notetaking handouts

Course Changes in Response to Feedback

- Additional report filed with Cornell IT to improve Wi-Fi
- **Thursday peer homework and quiz study session.**
 - First session, tomorrow 9/17, 5-6pm
 - Location: CIS Building first floor “ramble” (opposite end from Gimme!)
 - **Look for:** “INFO 1300” on the whiteboards
- Office hour attendance has averaged 0 students; **additional office hours by request**; email info1300@cornell.edu. **1 business day notice required**
- Additional space added to note-taking handout.
- Quizzes added to Canvas schedule (all other assignments already listed in Canvas).
- Renamed course schedule to **Tentative Schedule** on course website.

Review

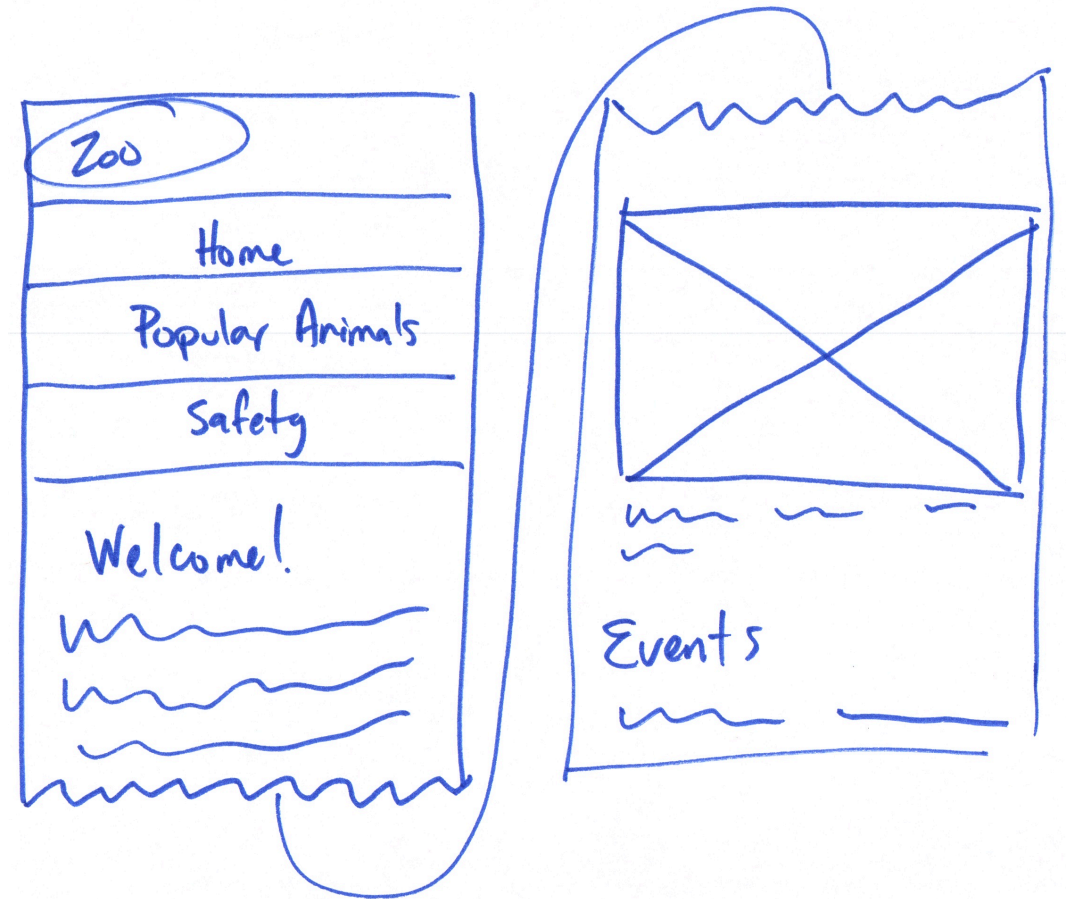
Review: Familiar Layout

Familiarity can lead to better **usability**.

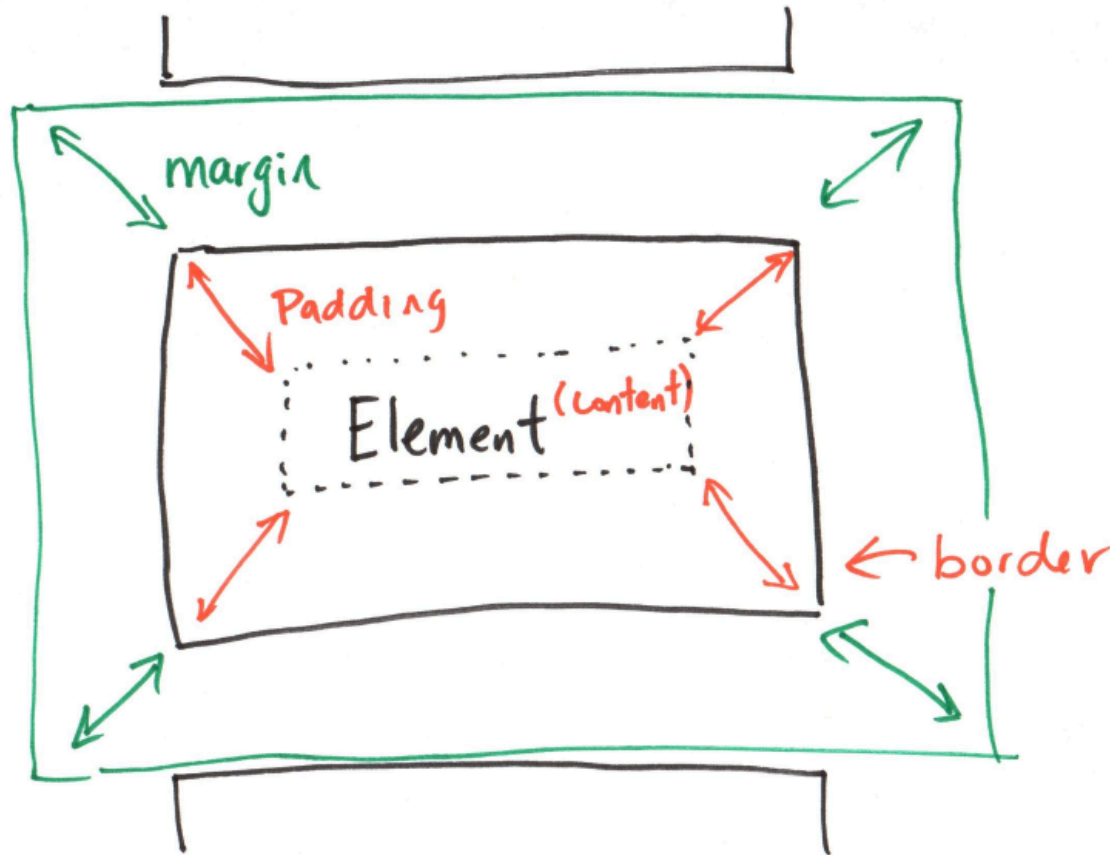
- Logo/Title top-left
- Nav Menu below *header* (no hamburger button)
- *Important* content visible first thing on page: `<h2>` + *content*
- Footer at bottom of page
- *Sections* are clearly defined
 - Sometimes with extra space
 - Sometimes with a border
 - Sometimes with a color
- Content fills the width of screen
- Main links are styled as buttons
- Not cluttered: plenty of **vertical** space between elements

Review: Sketches

Sketch: A distinct form of drawing which designers use to **propose, explore, refine, and communicate** ideas.



Review: The CSS Box Model



Margin: The space **outside** the box, between the box and other elements.

Border: The edge of the box.

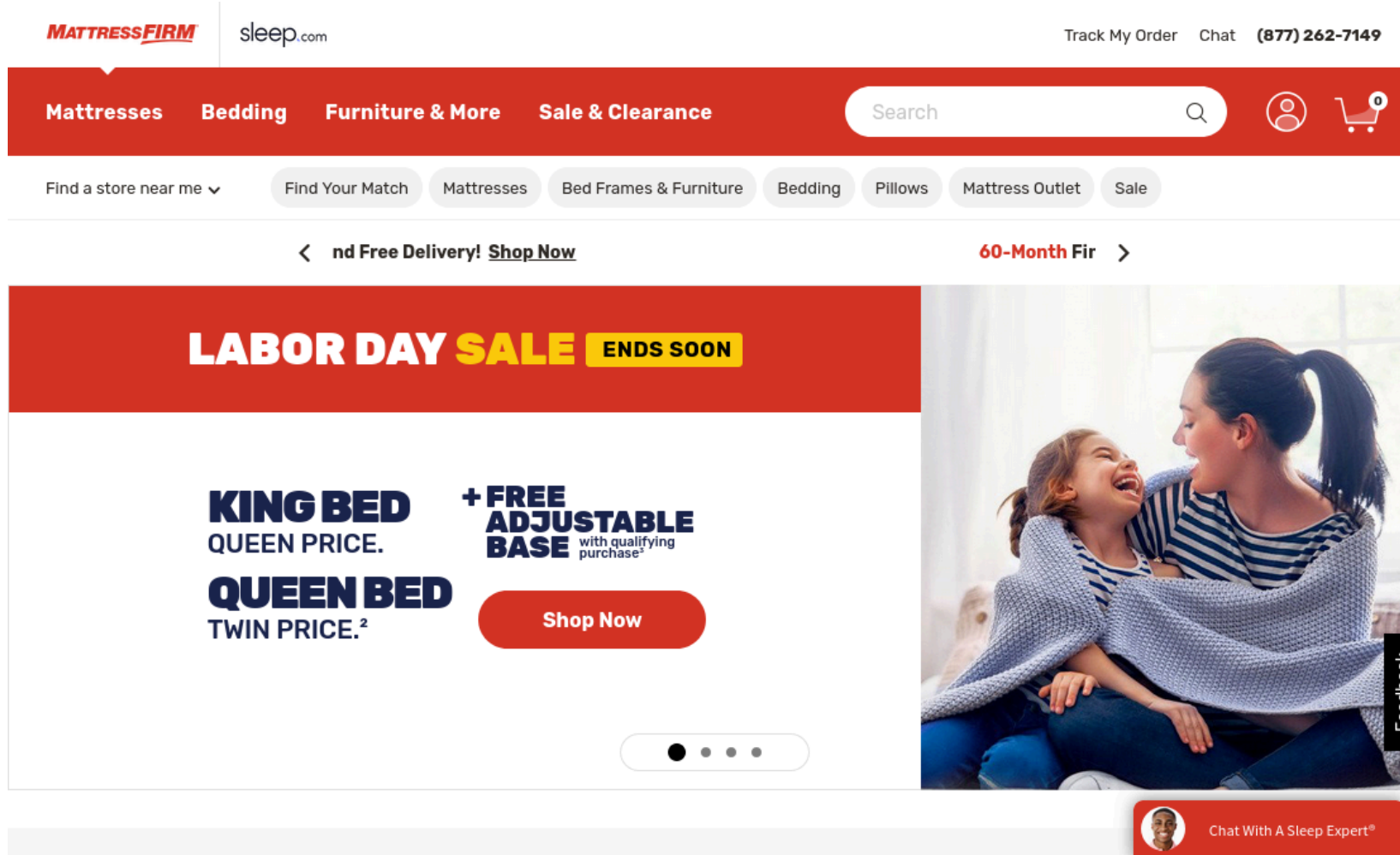
Padding: The space **inside** the box, between the content and the border.

Theme

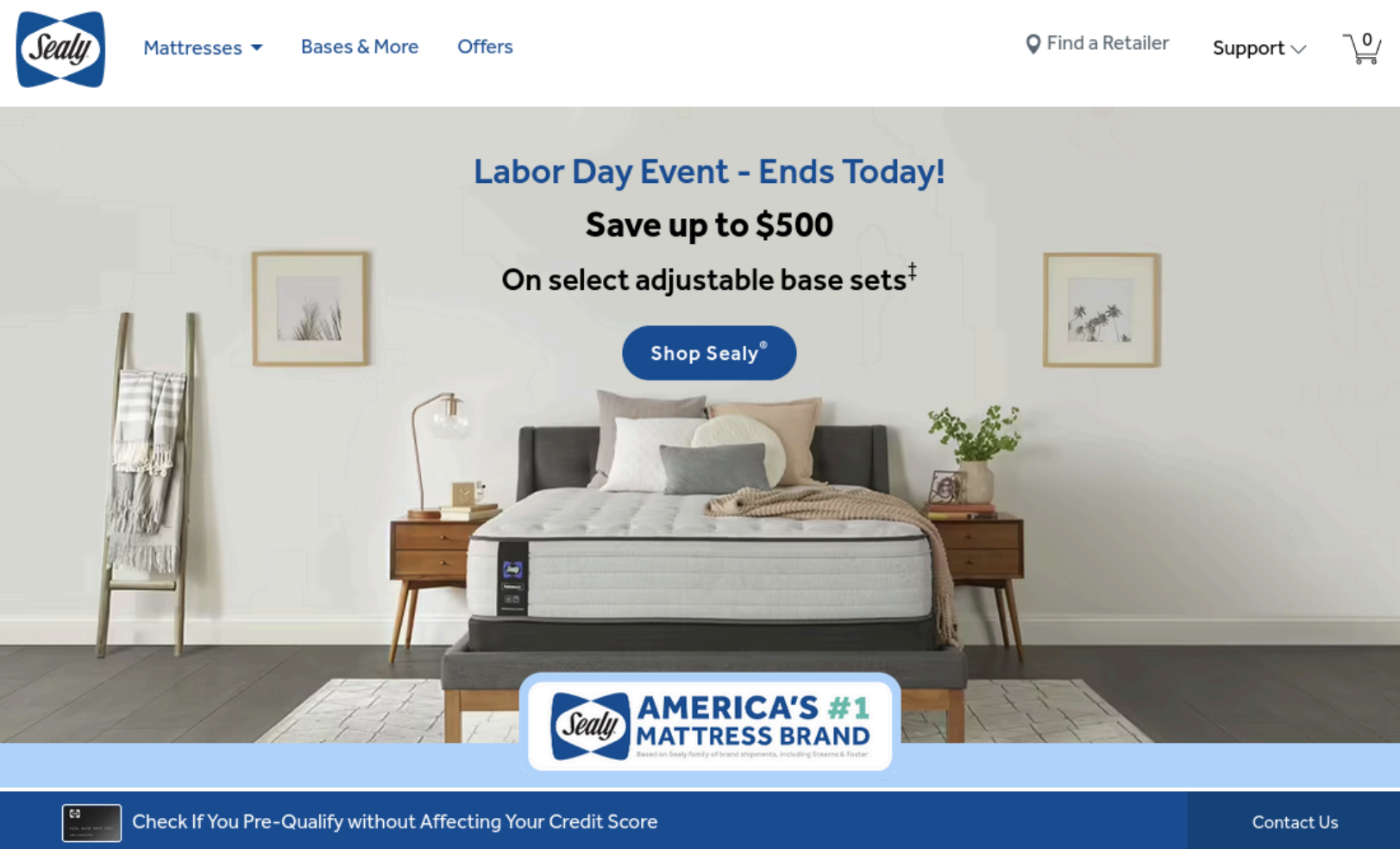
Visual Design – Website Theme

Visual design affects the way a website's visitors feel about a site.

- **Color** – foreground (text) vs. background contrast
- **Imagery** – pictures, screenshots, 😊 faces 😞, and symbols
- **Typography** – fonts, variants, weight, and style
- **Shape** – hard lines vs. soft edges
- **Alignment** – well aligned = professional vs. centered = amateur



Discussion: color, imagery, typography, shape, and alignment.



Discussion: color, imagery, typography, shape, and alignment.

Designing a Website's Theme

1. Understand your audience and their culture; understand the cultural significance of colors.

How does *this* audience perceive color and shape?

Example: Red can be positive or negative. Depends on culture.

2. Identify the emotions you wish to elicit in your site's audience.

Examples: professionalism, environmentally conscious, playful

3. Use **visual design** to pull out that feeling for visitors of the site.

Theme Tools: Color, Imagery, Typography, Shape, Alignment

Color

Color – Hue, Intensity, Value

Hue: the *pure* color itself.



Intensity: the *intensity/purity* of the color.

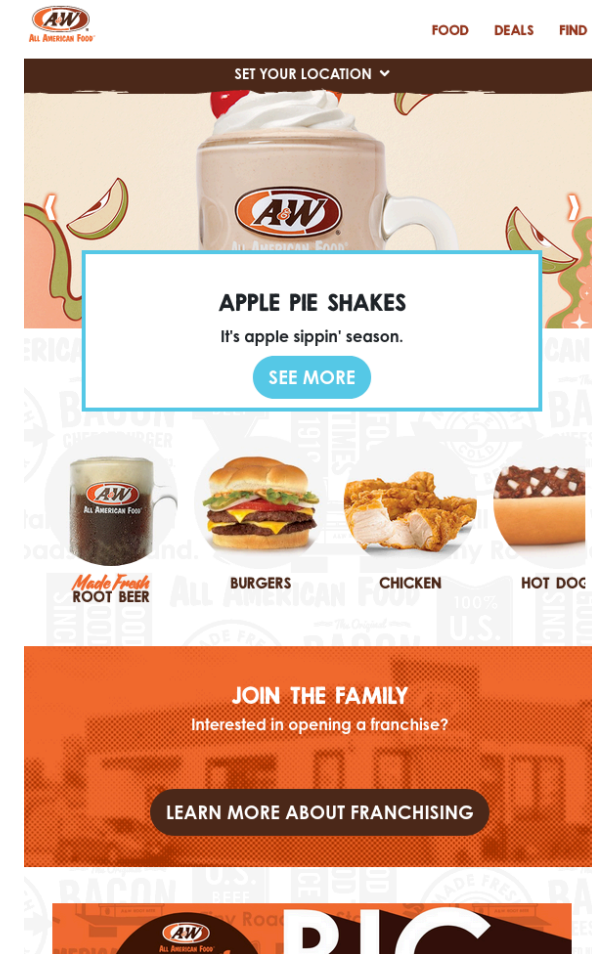
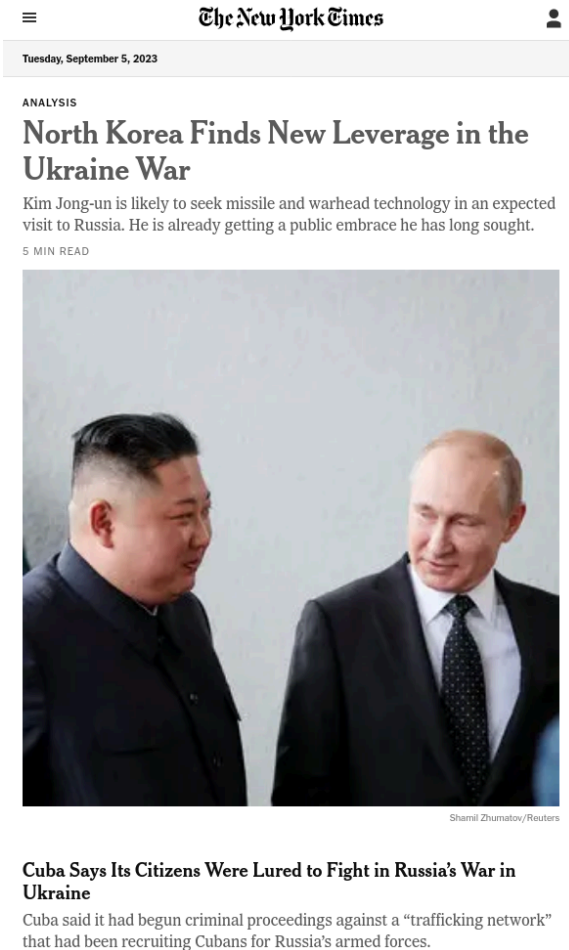


Value: the *lightness/darkness* of the color.



Carnelian (#B31B1B)

Example: How Color Elicits Emotion



Imagery

Imagery – “A picture is worth 1,000 words.”

**Use imagery to address user goals (content),
but also to make the site interesting (decoration).**

- Some images are content – they address a user’s goal.
- Some images are decoration – support the site’s theme and add interest.
- Decorative images should not over-shadow content images.

Content is king!

Tip: People love faces 😊; faces attract attention.

Content is King – Decorative Imagery

ACM BYTECAST

Featured ACM ByteCast

ACM ByteCast is a podcast series from ACM's Practitioner Board in which hosts Rashmi Mohan, Bruke Kifle, and Scott Hanselman interview researchers, practitioners, and innovators who are at the intersection of computing research and practice. Guests share their experiences, the lessons they've learned, and their own visions for the future of computing. [In the latest episode](#), new co-host Bruke Kifle, AI Product Manager at Microsoft and member of the ACM Practitioner Board, interviews Michelle Zhou, Co-Founder and CEO of Juji, Inc. She is an expert in the field of Human-Centered AI, an interdisciplinary area that intersects AI and Human-Computer Interaction (HCI).

Discover the Latest "Selects," Shortlists of Learning Resources Curated by Experts

ACM Selects are themed shortlists curated by subject matter experts for both serious and emerging computing professionals, with the goal of providing new ways to discover relevant resources, either through ACM or authenticated by ACM-affiliated specialists. The latest Selects covers "Getting Started With Internet Of Things: Computing And Communication", which offers a set of articles describing and motivating the IoT, and deep dives into the major aspects of IoT such as communication protocols, edge-to-cloud continuum, AI and data analytics, and security/privacy. You can find [part one of this Selects here](#). Please visit our archive of Selects on a variety of subjects which is available [here](#).

TechBrief on Quantum Computing and Simulation

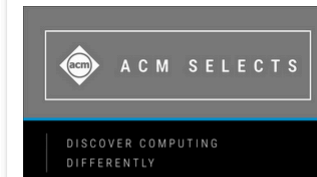
ACM TechBriefs is a series of short technical bulletins by ACM's Technology Policy Council that present scientifically-grounded perspectives on the impact of specific developments or applications of technology. Designed to complement ACM's activities in the policy arena, the primary goal is to inform rather than advocate for specific policies. The new edition focuses on quantum computing and simulation, the various yet profound societal and individual risks the latter may pose, and its potential benefits.



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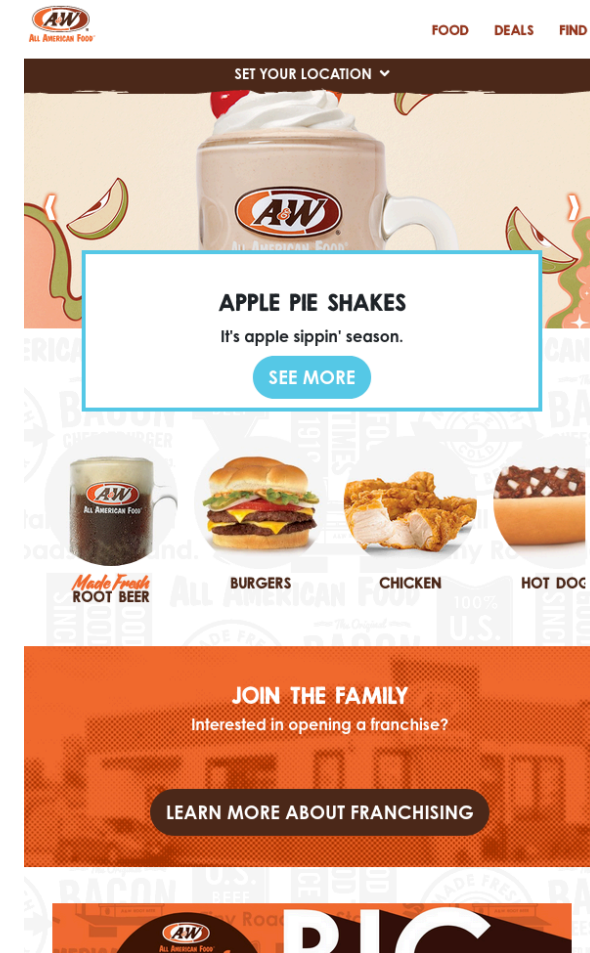
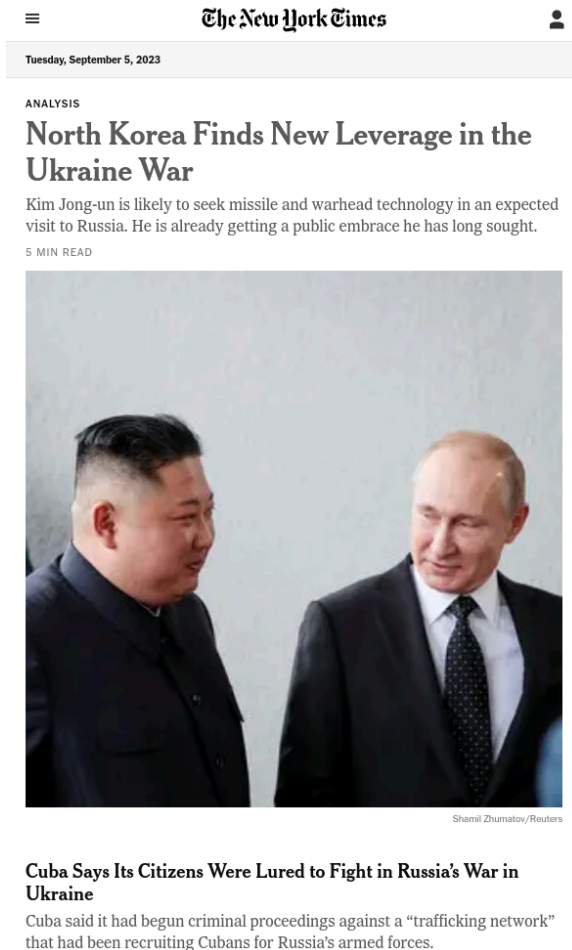


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<https://www.acm.org/>

Example: How Imagery Aids The Design



Typography

Typography – Font Family

The shape of text communicates emotion too.

Generic Serif

Generic Sans

Generic

Monospace

Typography – Font Styling

Bold

Italic

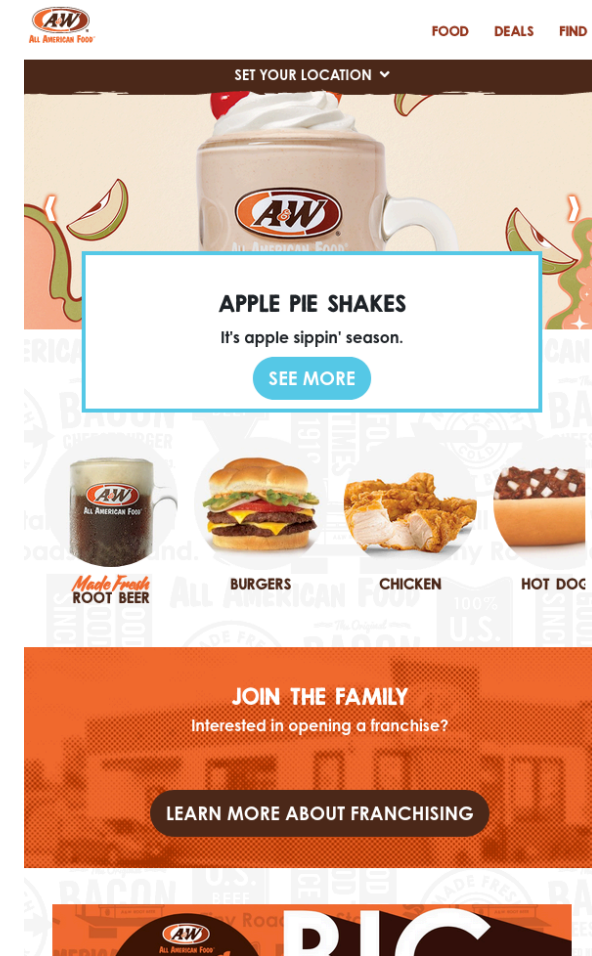
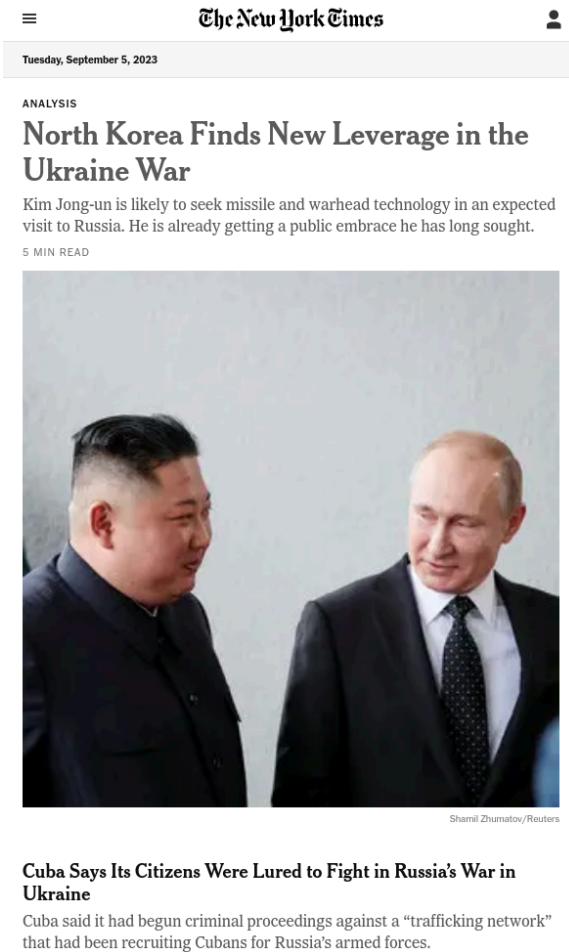
SMALL CAPS

UPPERCASE

Underlined

48pt

Example: How Typography Communicates to the User



Shape

Shape – Border, Border Radius

Use borders to emphasize or deemphasize the shape.
Soften element edges or change shape (ellipse).

No Border

Solid Border



Left Border

Hard Corners

Rounded Corners

Ellipse

Tip: Avoid too many borders; hard edges attract attention

Colored/Bordered Boxes – `<div>`

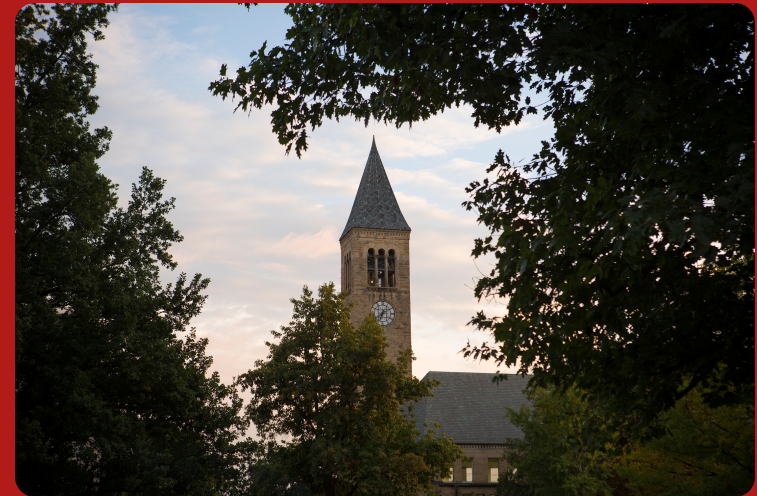
Need a colored box or a border around content?

The `<div>` element's purpose is for styling *only* (not structure).

```
<div>
  <h2>Colored Box Example</h2>
  <picture>
    
  </picture>
</div>
```

```
div {
  background-color: #B31B1B;
}
```

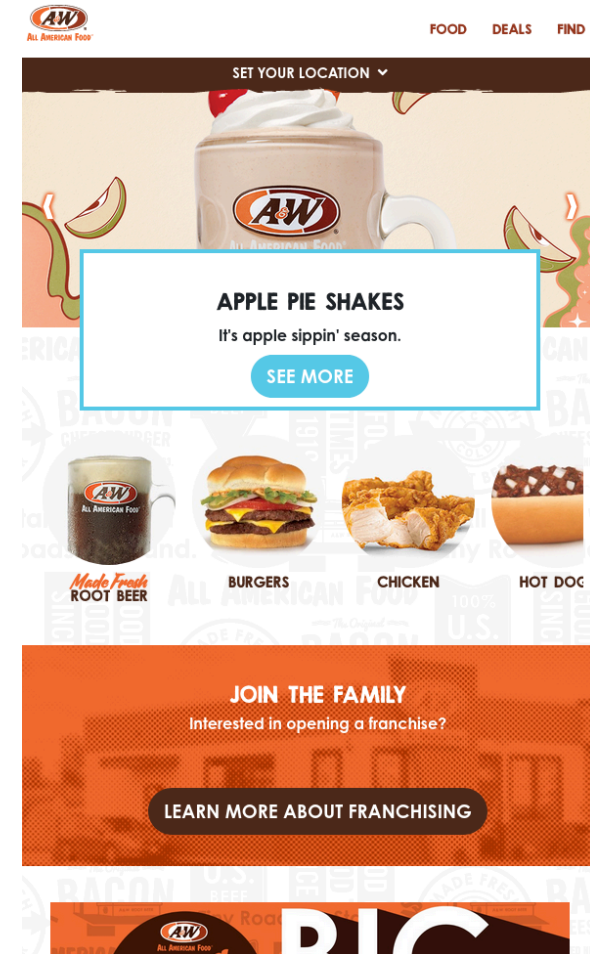
Colored Box Example



Activity: Implementing Shape

Complete **Part I** on your handout.

Add the HTML to create a box around the “**Apple Pie Shakes**”.



Gotcha: `<div>` is for Layout/Styling *Only*!

`<div>` does not provide any *structure*. It is *only* for layout/styling!

```
<div>
  <p>This is paragraph resides inside a div.</p>
  <picture>
    
  </picture>
  <p>So does this paragraph.</p>
</div>
```

This is paragraph resides inside a div.



So does this paragraph.

Alignment

Alignment – Guide the User’s Eye

Most content should be **left** aligned for enhanced usability and accessibility.

Adjust margins and padding to guide the user’s eye through multiple elements.

Caution: Use **center** alignment sparingly to draw the user’s attention!



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Pick up where you left off

Firefox View lets you see your tabs open on other devices and recent history.

Example: Alignment in Design

☰ The New York Times ☰

Tuesday, September 5, 2023

ANALYSIS

North Korea Finds New Leverage in the Ukraine War

Kim Jong-un is likely to seek missile and warhead technology in an expected visit to Russia. He is already getting a public embrace he has long sought.

5 MIN READ



Shamil Zhumatov/Reuters

Cuba Says Its Citizens Were Lured to Fight in Russia's War in Ukraine

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Alignment: Text

```
h2 {  
  text-align: center;  
}  
  
p {  
  text-align: left;  
}  
  
blockquote {  
  text-align: right;  
}
```

Center Alignment

Large chunks of center aligned text are hard to read and harm both usability and accessibility.

Use center aligned text **sparingly** to **draw attention** to important content.

Lots of center alignment =
unprofessional

Alignment - Centering Block Elements

1. Must be a block element:

```
img {  
  display: block;  
}
```

2. Set `width` and/or `max-width` property.
3. Set left and right margins to `auto`.

```
margin-left: auto;  
margin-right: auto;
```

This block element has a width of 300 pixels. Margins are yellow.

The element is centered, not the text.

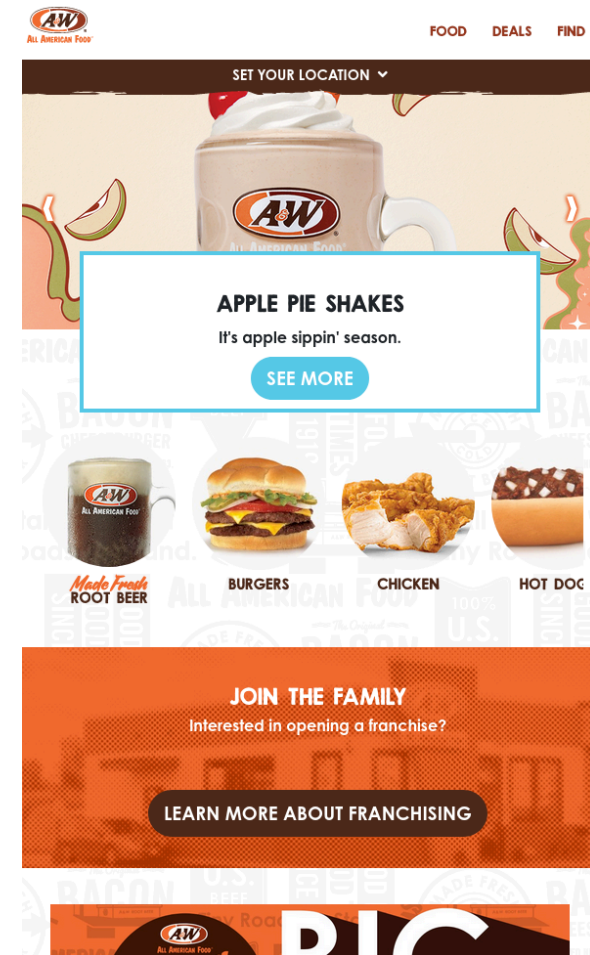
Activity: Centering Block Elements

Complete **Part II** on your handout.

Using CSS, center the box around the “**Apple Pie Shakes**” content.

Review:

- `block` element
- `width` or `max-width`
- `margin-left: auto;`
`margin-right: auto;`



Designing a Website's Theme

1. Find several example websites with themes that align with your website's audience.
2. Analyze the example websites' use of color, imagery, typography, shape, and alignment.
 - What emotions do the colors invoke in the audience?
 - What message is the imagery sending to the audience?
 - Does the typography change the message?
 - How does element shape impact that message?
 - Does the alignment communicate professionalism?
3. Bring those elements into your website's theme!

CSS Class Selector

You want to style of one (or several) elements, and not all of them?

Maybe you only want to change the style of just the first `<p>`, not all paragraphs.

Or you'd like the second `<section>` to have a different background color.

Or you'd like the logo `<img>` to use fixed dimensions, unlike the other `<img>` elements which use relative dimensions.

Class Selector

Class Selector: Selects all elements that have the given class attribute.

```
.CLASS_NAME {  
    /* CSS property value pairs */  
}
```

```
<element class="CLASS_NAME">  
    <!-- Element content -->  
</element>
```

Gotcha: Observe the period **before** the class name. It's **required!**

Gotcha: Observe there is **no** period before the class name.

Gotcha: No spaces in class names.

Example: Class Selector

```
.rounded-corners {  
  border-radius: 20px;  
}
```

```
<img class="rounded-corners" ... >
```



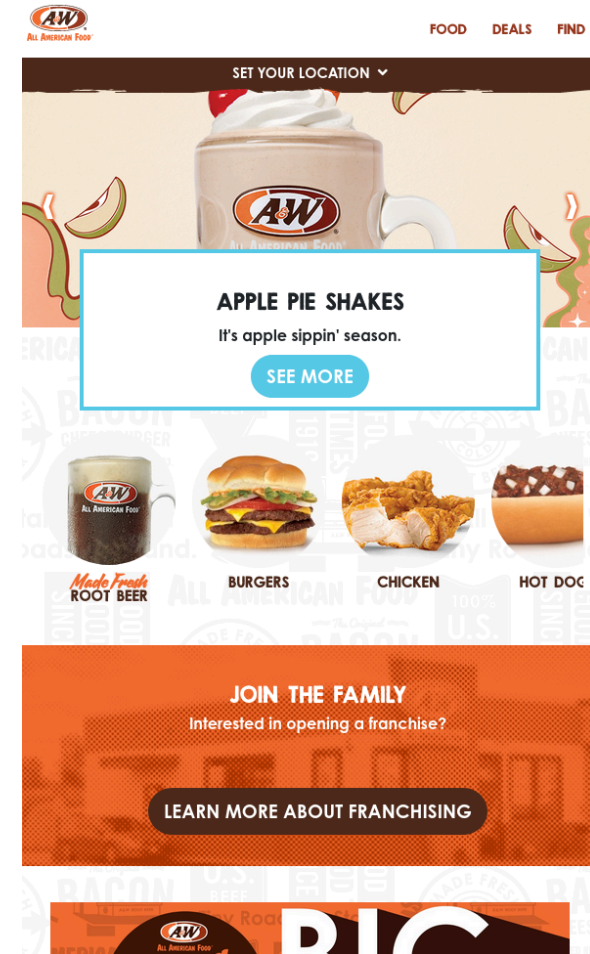
Tip: Use descriptive class names that describe the meaning or purpose of the styling.

e.g. `warning`, `centered`, `title`, `navigation-bar`, etc.

Activity: Class Selector Practice

Complete **Part III** on your handout.

Create the CSS classes to style the box around the “**Apple Pie Shakes**” and the “**See More**” button.



Multiple CSS Classes

- Elements may belong to multiple CSS classes.
- Separate classes in the HTML `class` attribute with **spaces**.

```
<element class="CLASS_1 CLASS_2 CLASS_3">
```

```
.rounded-corners {  
    border-radius: 20px;  
}  
  
.centered {  
    /* TODO */  
}
```

```
<img class="centered rounded-corners" ... >
```



What's Next

Practice Quiz 3 (Class 6 & 7, Homework 3) on Friday.

Homework 4 now due Mon Sept 21, 2026 at 11:59pm.

Exam I **moved** to Wed Sept 23, 2026, **during class**.