

Browsers and dev tools

MA Web Design + Content Planning

It's possible that you only ever use one browser and, if that's the case, that browser is most likely to be Google Chrome. At the time of writing, 63% of all web users are using Chrome, with Safari in second place at 20%. All other browsers, such as Microsoft Edge, Mozilla Firefox, and Opera are at 5% or less.



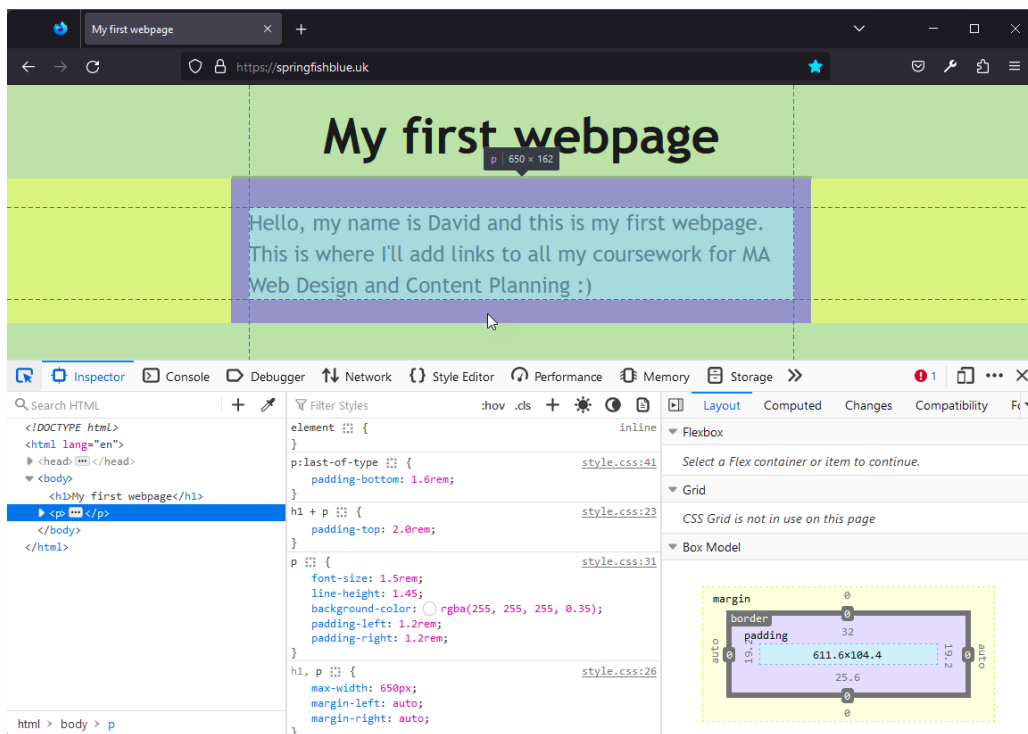
When you build websites, it's important to know that your site displays correctly in as many browsers as possible. We recommend that you get into the habit of using several browsers. There's no need to change your preferred browser for general browsing, but adopting a second or third browser for development work will help you understand the experience of a wider range of web users.

For development work, we recommend [Mozilla Firefox Developer Edition](#) as your creative browser. We like the ethics of the Mozilla Foundation and support their [manifesto](#) for a healthy internet. Most browsers have web developer tools built in, and Firefox is no exception. Indeed, the developer version of the Firefox browser is specifically designed for us and the way we want to work.



When we look at your coursework, we'll be using Firefox. If you use the same browser when you're creating your websites, we'll all see the same results.

Developer tools

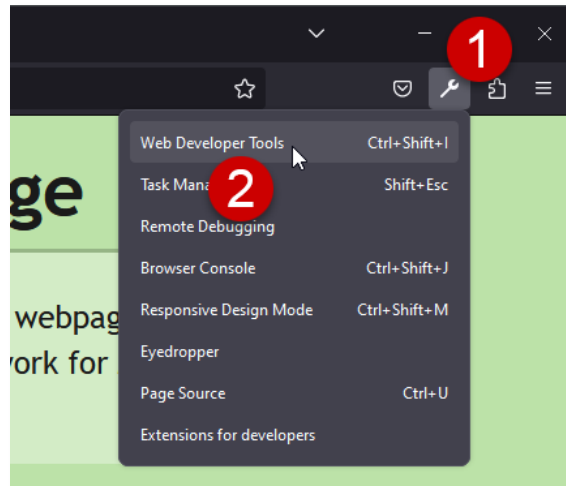


Using your browser developer tools is the best way to diagnose any issues with your code. The image above shows the Firefox developer tools in action. As you can see that simply selecting an element in your browser displays the corresponding HTML (left column) and CSS (middle column) along with other useful information such as a graphical representation of the box model property values (right column). This is super-helpful when designing page layouts and is a great help in diagnosing any problems.

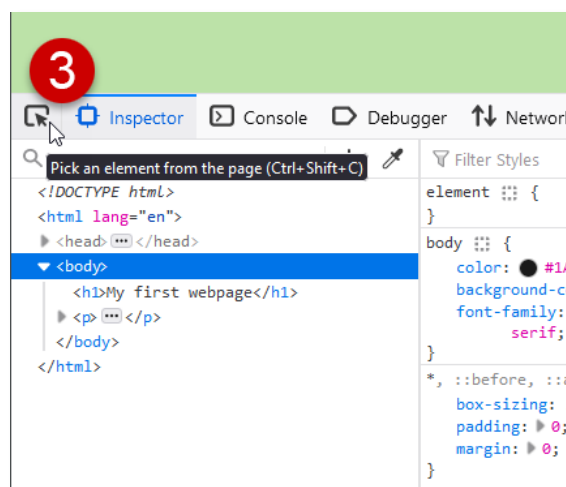
Using the element inspector

Once you have installed Firefox Developer Edition, open the browser and navigate to any webpage. Then follow these steps:

1. Click the spanner icon (top right) to reveal the developer menu.
2. Select “Web Developer Tools” from the menu. A panel will open, displaying the HTML and CSS code for the current page.



3. To inspect a specific element, click the picker icon (top left of the developer tools panel), and select any element in the browser window. Dev tools will show you all the information relating to that element.



You'll use the inspect element tool a lot as you develop your webpages so it may be useful to memorise the keyboard shortcut. On Windows, this is **Ctrl+Shift+C**. On a Mac it's **Cmd+Shift+C**.

View page source

One more tool you should be aware of is the ability to display the source HTML of any page you visit. This is an easy way to look at the way other people have achieved certain results and is a great learning aid.

There are several ways you can view the source of a webpage:

- You can right-click on the page background and select “View Page Source” from the context menu.
- You can click the spanner icon and select “Page Source” from the dev tools menu.
- You can use the keyboard shortcut **Ctrl+U** (Windows) and **Cmd+U** (Mac).

Whichever option you choose, you’ll see the entire page source (HTML) displayed in a new browser tab. Notice that all linked files are displayed as live links [1], that means to can look at any CSS and JavaScript files, not just the HTML. Basically, you can see exactly how any webpage is built.



```
1 <!DOCTYPE html>
2 <html lang="en">
3   <head>
4     <meta charset="utf-8">
5     <title>My first webpage</title>
6     <link rel="stylesheet" href="style.css">
7   </head>
8   <h1>My first webpage</h1>
9   <body>
10    <p>hello, my name is David and this is my first webpage. This is wh
11  </body>
12 </html>
13
```

Viewing the page source of your own webpages is also a useful way to check that your code is correct. The Firefox page source view will show any code errors with a red dotted underline [2]. If you see this, you know there’s a problem.

Now that you have a browser that you can use for web development work, your toolkit is just about complete. If you’ve followed these helpers from the beginning, you’ll now have a code editor, an FTP client and a development browser, the three components you need to build excellent websites.

The final step in getting everything ready for effective learning is to install WordPress on your domain. We’ll have a special session to help you do this but look at the [Installing WordPress on your domain](#) helper for details.

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