

Cheat Sheet

Part 1: What is WordPress? Dot com vs. dot org

WordPress is an *open source content management system*.

- Open source: free to download, edit, update and share.
- Content Management System: a tool to create, store, and publish content in one environment.

WordPress.com

- Pro: store your blog on the WordPress server. YourBlog.WordPress.com
- Con: very little appearance editing freedom, cannot use plugins

WordPress.org

- Pro: edit themes to your heart's content, use the full functionality of WordPress
- Con: must host site yourself on BlueHost, DreamHost, GoDaddy, etc.

Part 2: Picking and using themes on WordPress

Theme: fancy word for template. WordPress themes are made in PHP.

Places to find good themes: Smashing Magazine, WordPress Free Theme Database, simply Googling "good free WordPress themes."

How to change your header in a WordPress theme (the hard way):

1. Upload your image of choice to the WordPress media library. Copy the file URL.
2. Go to Dashboard/Appearance/Editor
3. Click on Style.CSS and look for .header or #header. It will be labeled clearly.
4. Under the header, you'll see a snippet of code that looks like ``. Paste the file URL over the "image" part of this code.
5. Save and refresh to view your new image. Resize as needed.

Part 3: Freaking widgets, how do they work?

Widget: Small application which can be installed and used inside a webpage.

To use widgets with WordPress, go to Dashboard then click Appearance/Widgets. Drag and drop widgets into the sidebar.

Useful widgets every theme has:

- Calendar: display a mini calendar on your sidebar with post days highlighted.
- Links: display your blogroll on the sidebar with absolutely no coding necessary!
- Text: not just for plain text; HTML as well so you can put images, ads, even your TBD banner in your sidebar by using this.

Part 4: Plugins – the widgets that do your coding for you

Plugin: A computer add-on that works with an existing piece of software to create new functionality.

To use plugins with WordPress, you *must* have WordPress.org. Go to Dashboard, click Plugins on the left sidebar, then click “Add new.” Be careful about downloading plugins that have NOT been tested with your version of WordPress!

Useful plugins to download for free:

- Sexy Bookmarks by Sharaholic: Racy name, unbeatable social media. Connect each blog post to as many social media outlets as you like.
- WordPress Database Backup by Austin Matzko: Have a full backup of your site saved and sent to your email each day, week, or whenever! Great security.
- Greg's High Performance SEO: My favorite way to easily include SEO keywords in your blog post... without them showing up to readers.
- WP Super Cache by Donncha O Caoimh: Makes your site upload much faster.
- Askimet by Automattic: A pain to install; essential to have. Keeps you spam-free.

Part 5: Getting crazy with CSS

CSS: Stands for Cascading Style Sheets. The scripting language used to create and customize the look and format of a webpage. Without CSS, the site is just a skeleton.

Familiarize yourself with the Style.CSS page:

```
#header {  
    background: #FFFFFF;  
    width: 965px;  
    margin: 0px auto 0px;  
    padding: 5px 0px 0px 0px;  
    text-align: center;  
    text-transform: uppercase;  
}
```

1. #header – the **selector**. This determines the style of what thing is being customized. In this case, we are customizing the page header. We could also customize the body (#body) or titles (h1) or hyperlinks (a) or many other things.
2. Background, etc. - these are called **properties**. Things like the background, width, and margin are the things we are changing to customize the header.
3. #FFFFFF – this is the **hex code** for the color white. Look for more here: <http://www.december.com/html/spec/colorhex.html>
4. Everything after the colon is a **value**. Change these to alter the sizes and alignment of each property.

For more CSS help, try this beginner's guide: <http://www.w3schools.com/css/default.asp>

Part 6: PHP... and BEYOND!

PHP: Stands for Hypertext PreProcessor (I know that doesn't make sense.) A free scripting language used to produce and edit dynamic (not static or still) web pages, such as blogs.

All WordPress themes are created in PHP.

PHP and WordPress theme-building resources (These are all tutorials I have really used to learn myself!):

- PHP 101: PHP for the Absolute Beginner - <http://devzone.zend.com/article/627>
- How to Create a WordPress Theme: The Ultimate WordPress Theme Tutorial - <http://theshaper.com/wordpress-themes-templates-tutorial/>
- Installing WordPress Locally on your Mac with MAMP (PC also available here) - http://codex.wordpress.org/Installing_WordPress_Locally_on_Your_Mac_With_MAMP
- How to Build Your Own WordPress Theme - <http://line25.com/tutorials/how-to-build-your-own-wordpress-theme>

Want more advice?

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