

MADCAP FLARE DESKTOP 2026

Multiple Stylesheets

Copyright © 2026 MadCap Software. All rights reserved.

Information in this document is subject to change without notice. The software described in this document is furnished under a license agreement or nondisclosure agreement. The software may be used or copied only in accordance with the terms of those agreements. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording for any purpose other than the purchaser's personal use without the written permission of MadCap Software.

MadCap Software
1660 17th Street, Suite 201
Denver, Colorado 80202
858-320-0387
www.madcapsoftware.com

THIS PDF WAS CREATED USING MADCAP FLARE.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

Welcome	5
---------------	---

CHAPTER 2

Creating a Project From a Template	6
How to Create a New Project From a Template	7

CHAPTER 3

Creating a Stylesheet	8
How to Locate the Primary Stylesheet	9
How to Add a Stylesheet	13

CHAPTER 4

Associating Stylesheets	15
How to Associate a Stylesheet With a Project	16
How to Associate a Stylesheet With a File	19

CHAPTER 5

Linking Stylesheets	24
How to Link Stylesheets	25

APPENDIX

PDFs	30
Tutorials	30
Cheat Sheets	31
User Guides	32

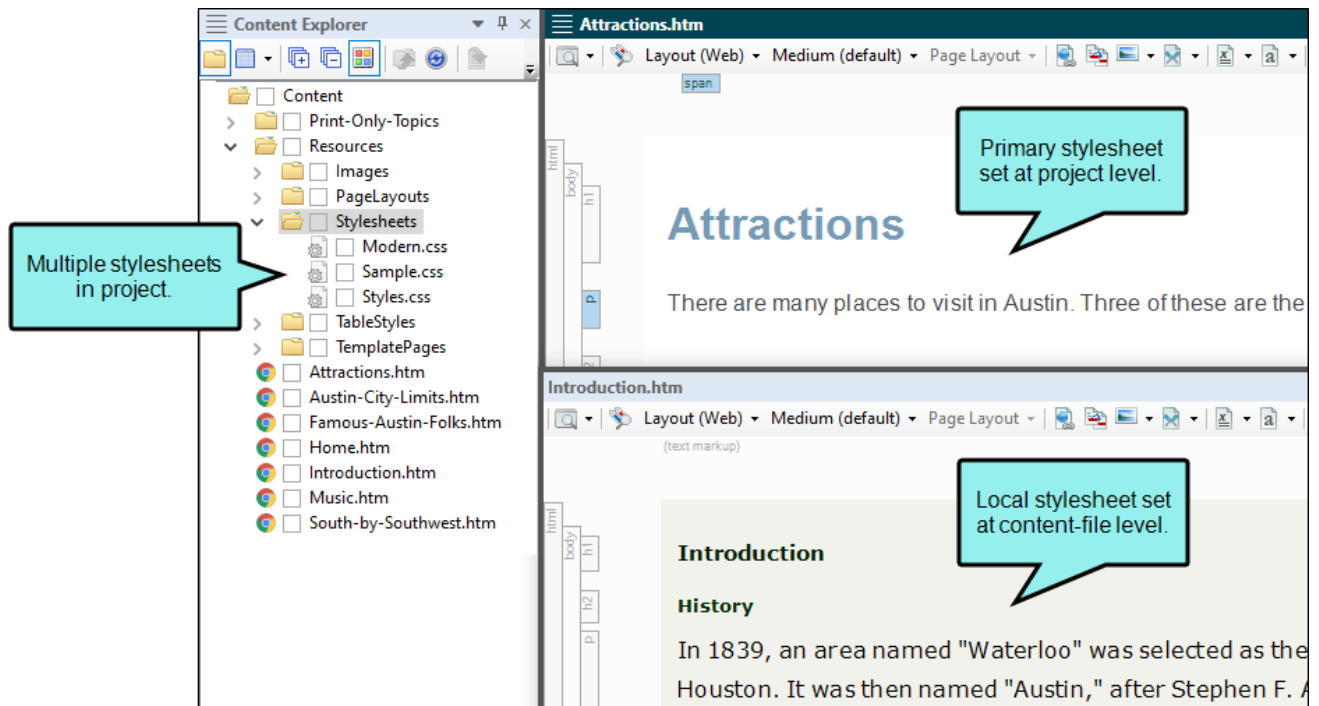
CHAPTER 1

Welcome

Approximate Time: 20 minutes


Welcome to the Styles Tutorial—Using Multiple Stylesheets.


- **Tutorial Goal** Learning how to use multiple stylesheets in a Flare project.
- **Key Concepts** Adding extra stylesheets to a project, using primary and local stylesheets, associating stylesheets with different files at different levels, and linking stylesheets.



Creating a Project From a Template

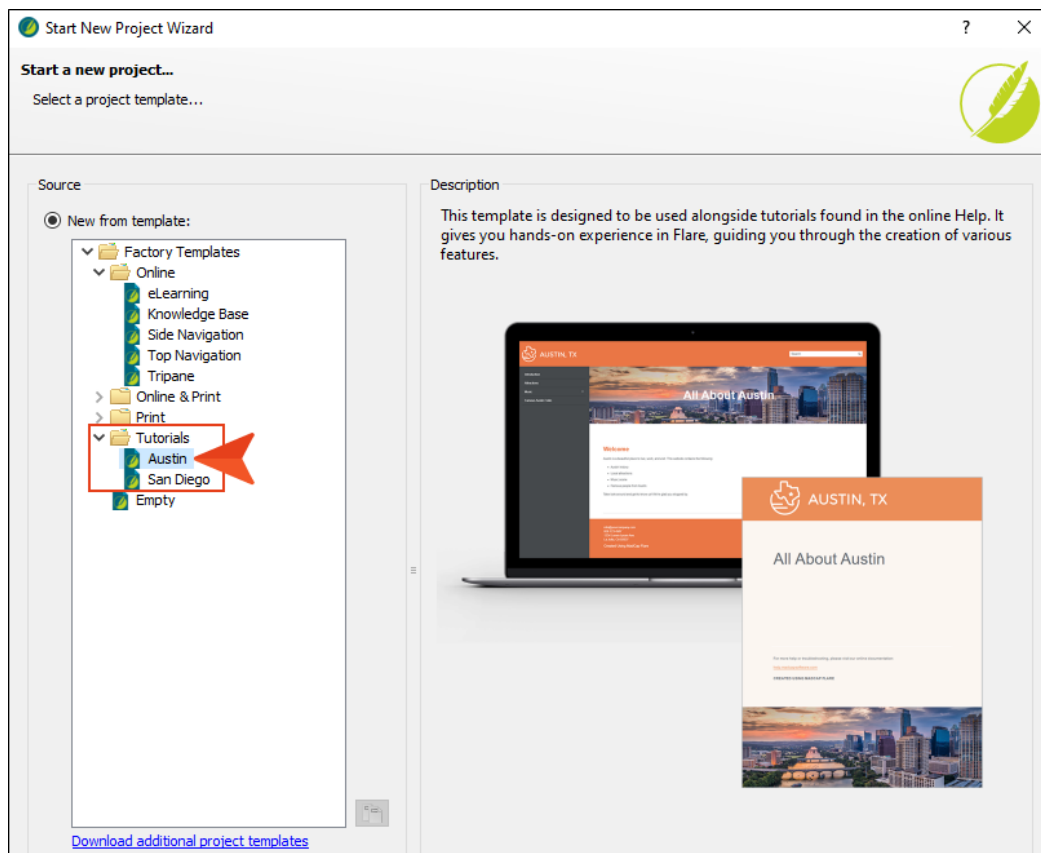
To start, let's create a new project based on Flare's Austin template.

 **NOTE** This is a standalone tutorial. However, if you have completed the previous styles tutorials, you can skip this topic since a project has already been created.

 **NOTE** If you plan to work with the project from the previous styles tutorials, the images you see as you go through this tutorial will be slightly different. If you want the images to match, then it is recommended to create a new project for this tutorial.

I How to Create a New Project From a Template

1. Select **File > New Project**. The Start New Project Wizard opens.
2. In the **Project name** field, give your project any name you want.
3. (Optional) In the **Project folder** field, you can enter a location where you want to save your project. By default, projects are saved in your Documents > My Projects folder.
4. Click **Next**.
5. Under **Factory Templates**, expand the **Tutorials** folder. Select the **Austin** template.



6. Click **Next**.
7. For branding, keep the default settings. (This is where you could customize your project's look with branding, such as colors and logo.) Click **Next**.
8. Click **Finish**. The project is created and loaded into Flare Desktop.

CHAPTER 3

Creating a Stylesheet

You can launch Flare Desktop and start authoring without having to think about styles right away. The first step in using styles in your topics is to add a new stylesheet. However, if a stylesheet was included in the template when you created the project, you can use that one instead of creating a new one.

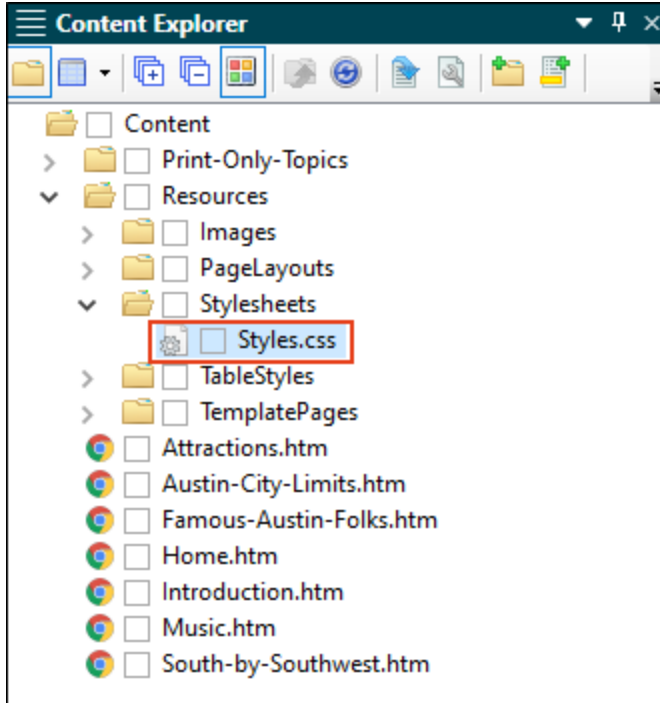
This chapter discusses the following:

- How to Locate the Primary Stylesheet 9
- How to Add a Stylesheet 13

I How to Locate the Primary Stylesheet

When you start working in the Austin project, there is a stylesheet already set for the project. A stylesheet set at the project or target level is referred to as primary stylesheet, and a stylesheet set at the content-file level is a local stylesheet. Let's take a look at the primary stylesheet.

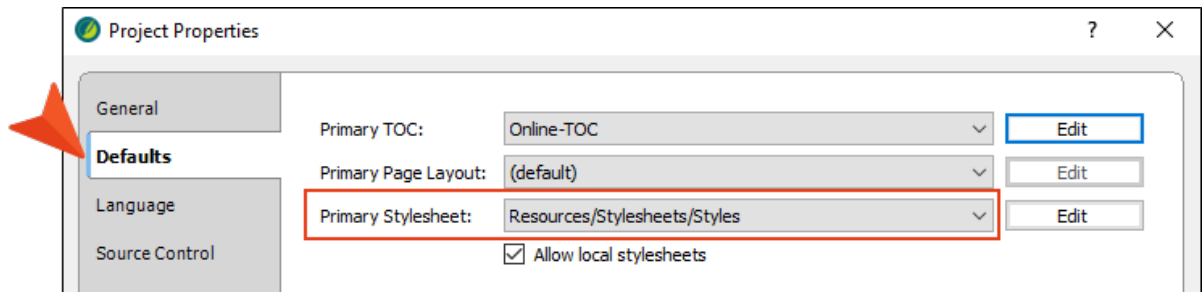
1. From the Content Explorer, expand **Resources > Stylesheets**. This is the default location for the project stylesheet, Styles.css. (If you use a different template for your project, you may see other stylesheets.)



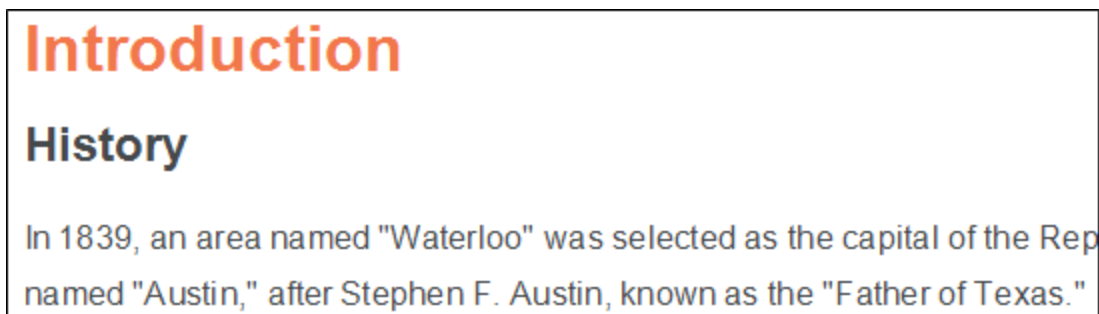
2. From the **Project** ribbon, click **Project Properties**.




3. The Project Properties dialog opens. Select the **Defaults** tab. The Primary Stylesheet field is already populated with the Styles.css file.



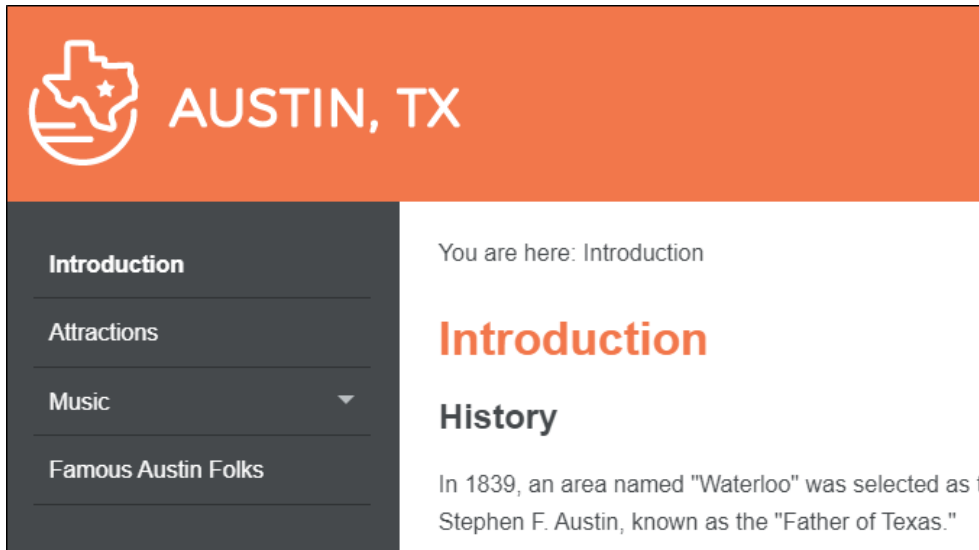
4. Click **OK**.
5. From the Content Explorer, double-click the **Introduction.htm** file. Notice the styles in the topic (orange h1, black h2, font size 12pt, etc.). The styles come from the stylesheet.



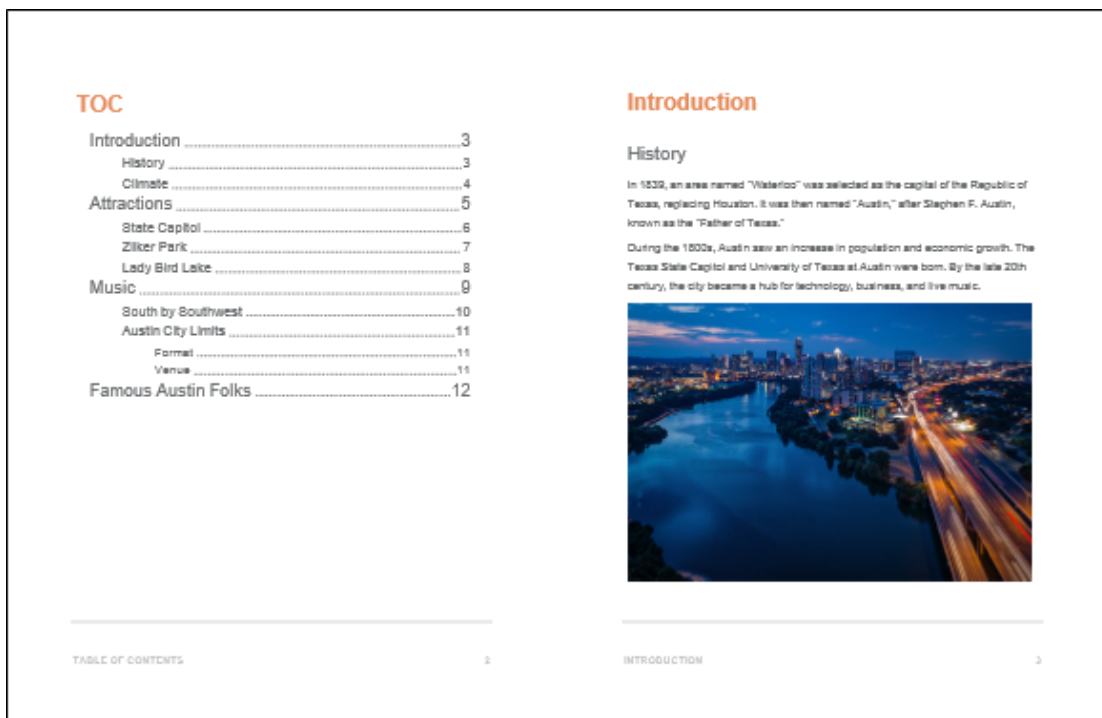
 **NOTE** If you are working the Styles tutorials in a sequential order without creating a new project each time, keep in mind that styles have been changed in the Styles.css file. The images may not match for the Styles.css primary stylesheet in this tutorial.

6. From the **Project** ribbon, click the **Build Primary** drop-down and select **Build All-About-Austin-HTML5**. The Builds window pane opens at the bottom of the Flare Desktop interface, and the target begins to generate. When the build finishes successfully, the Build Progress cell turns dark green.


7. Double-click the row to open the HTML5 output and view the styles in the output.




8. Repeat the steps above to build and view All-About-Austin-PDF.



Notice the styles in the generated output files. They correspond to the styles from the primary stylesheet, and display headings in orange and black.

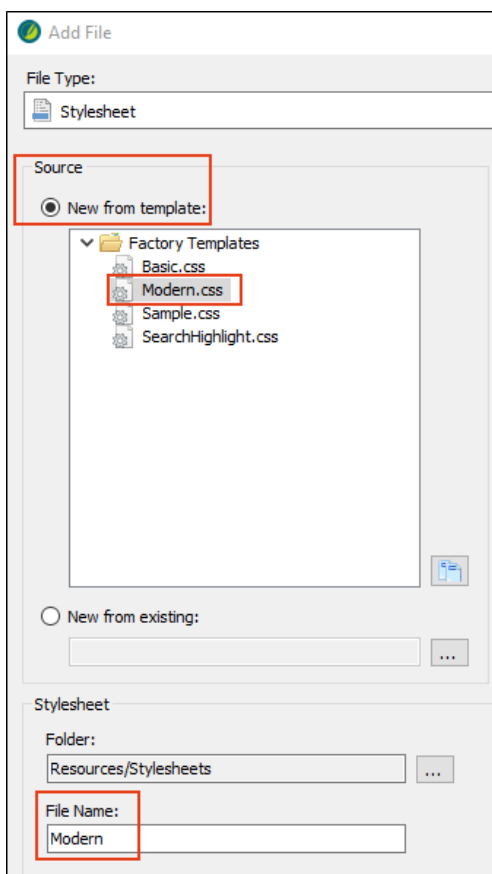
 **TIP** The simplest and quickest way to get started with a new project is to create a single stylesheet and set it at the project level.

 **NOTE** It is recommended to use one stylesheet for your project if you can get away with it. This means there is only one stylesheet to maintain. However, you might have a project where you need more than one stylesheet to meet your needs. For more information see the Help system.


I How to Add a Stylesheet

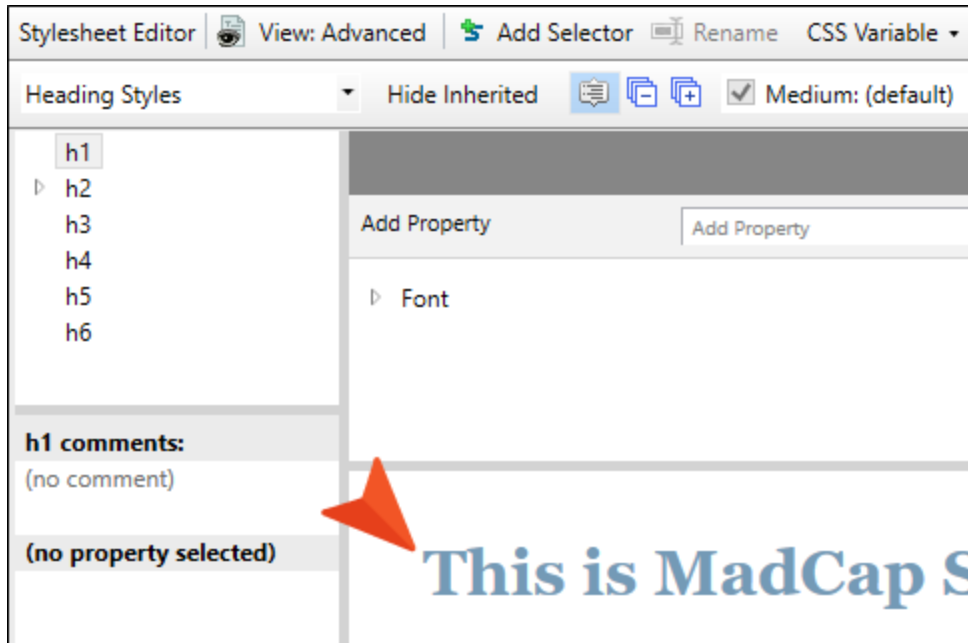
In some cases, having multiple stylesheets might make more sense for your project. Flare Desktop makes it easy to add extra stylesheets to a project.

1. From the Content Explorer, right-click the **Stylesheets** folder, and from the context menu select **New > Stylesheet**. The Add File dialog opens. (You can add a stylesheet from any folder in the Content Explorer, but by initiating it from the Stylesheets folder, you direct it to store in that folder.)
2. In the **Source** section, select **New from template**.
3. Expand the **Factory Templates** folder, and select **Modern.css**.
4. In the **Stylesheet** section, in the **File Name** field, type `Modern`.



5. Click **Add**. The new stylesheet is added to the Stylesheets folder, and it opens in the Stylesheet Editor.


 **NOTE** You can get a feel for how styles might appear by reviewing the Preview row (Simplified view), or the Preview section (Advanced view) in the Stylesheet Editor. For example, if you select the h1 element, that style displays to preview.



Associating Stylesheets

You can associate a stylesheet with specific content for a preferred look and feel. The primary stylesheet controls the look of all files associated at the target or project level. The local stylesheet controls the look of a single file associated at the content level.

With multiple stylesheets, be aware that rules of precedence come into play. In general, the closer a stylesheet is to the source, the higher its precedence will be. For more information see the Help system.

 **NOTE** Consider the most efficient way to achieve a unique look and feel for different outputs. Instead of using multiple stylesheets it may be more effective to use one stylesheet with different mediums. For example, if the look of content is mostly the same except for minor differences (e.g., product branding, or online vs. print output), then it might make more sense to use one stylesheet with different mediums applied. But if there are a lot of design differences for some content then perhaps multiple stylesheets would be better.


This chapter discusses the following:

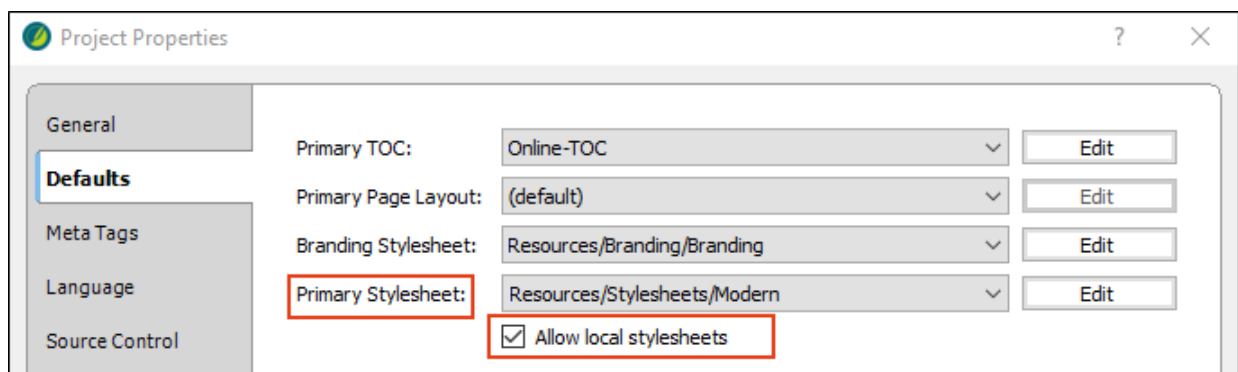
How to Associate a Stylesheet With a Project	16
How to Associate a Stylesheet With a File	19

I How to Associate a Stylesheet With a Project

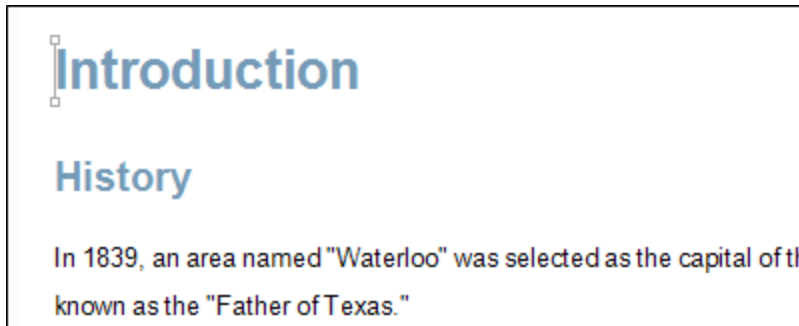
After adding a stylesheet to the project, you need to associate the stylesheet with files that you want to use it for. In this example, let's use the modern stylesheet as a new primary stylesheet, and set it at the project level (since we want all the files in the project to associate with the modern stylesheet).

1. From the **Project** ribbon, click **Project Properties**. The Project Properties dialog opens.
2. Make sure the **Defaults** tab has focus, and in the **Primary Stylesheet** drop-down, select **Resources > Stylesheets > Modern**. Click **OK**.

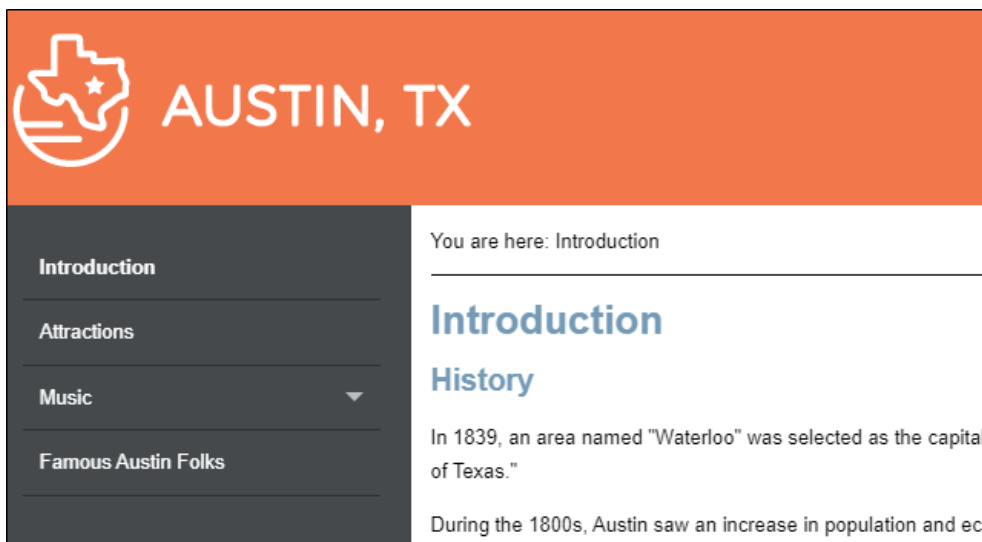
 **NOTE** With the Austin template, notice the **Allow local stylesheets** check box is already selected. This option enables you to set "local" stylesheets at the content-file level (e.g., topics).



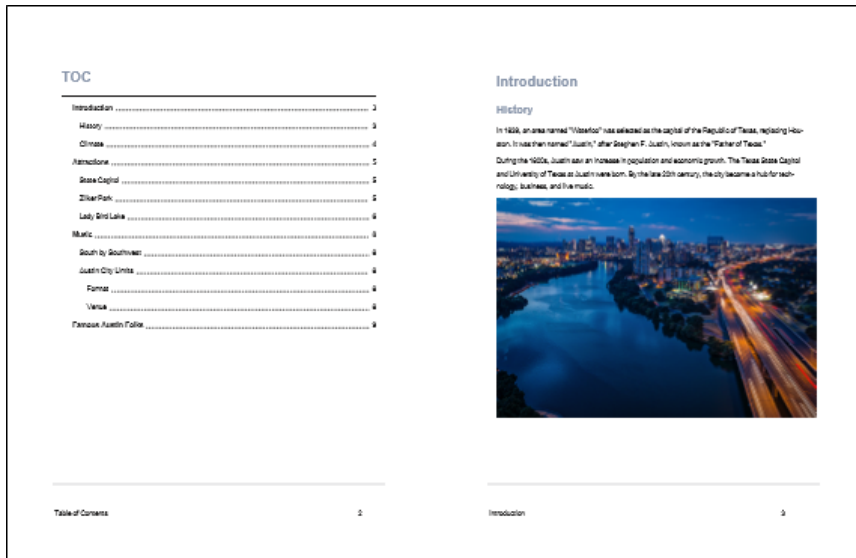
3. Open **Introduction.htm**. The project styles change to the new styles designated by the modern stylesheet. Keep in mind that only one primary stylesheet can be set at the project level.



4. Select the **Project** ribbon. From the **Build Primary** drop-down, select **Build All-About-Austin-HTML5**. The Builds window pane opens at the bottom of the Flare Desktop interface, and the target begins to generate. When the build finishes successfully, the Build Progress cell turns dark green.
5. Double-click the row to open the HTML5 output and view the styles in the output.



6. Repeat the steps above to build and view All-About-Austin-PDF.

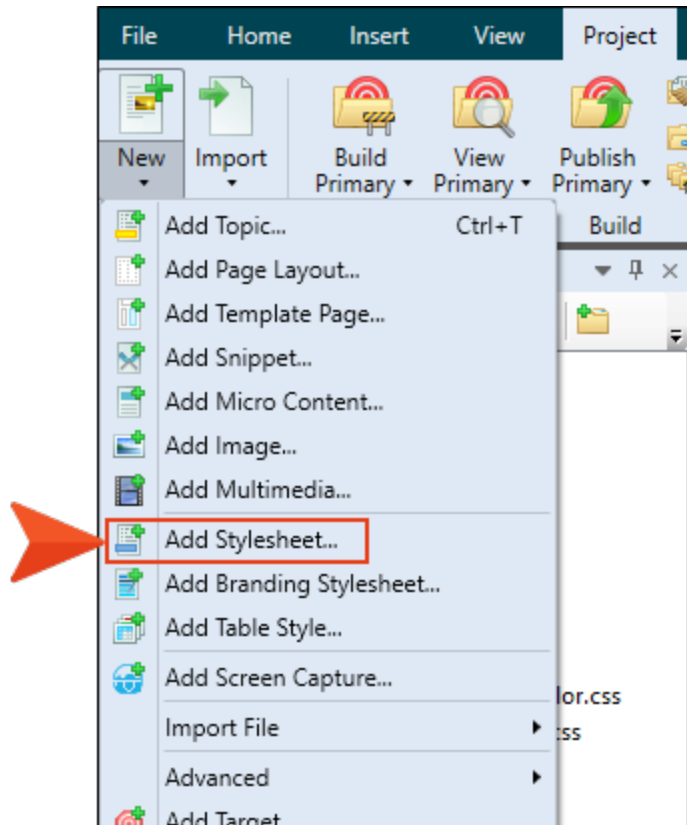


Notice the styles in the generated output files. They correspond to the styles from the primary stylesheet. The headings display in light blue, and the font throughout the project is smaller.

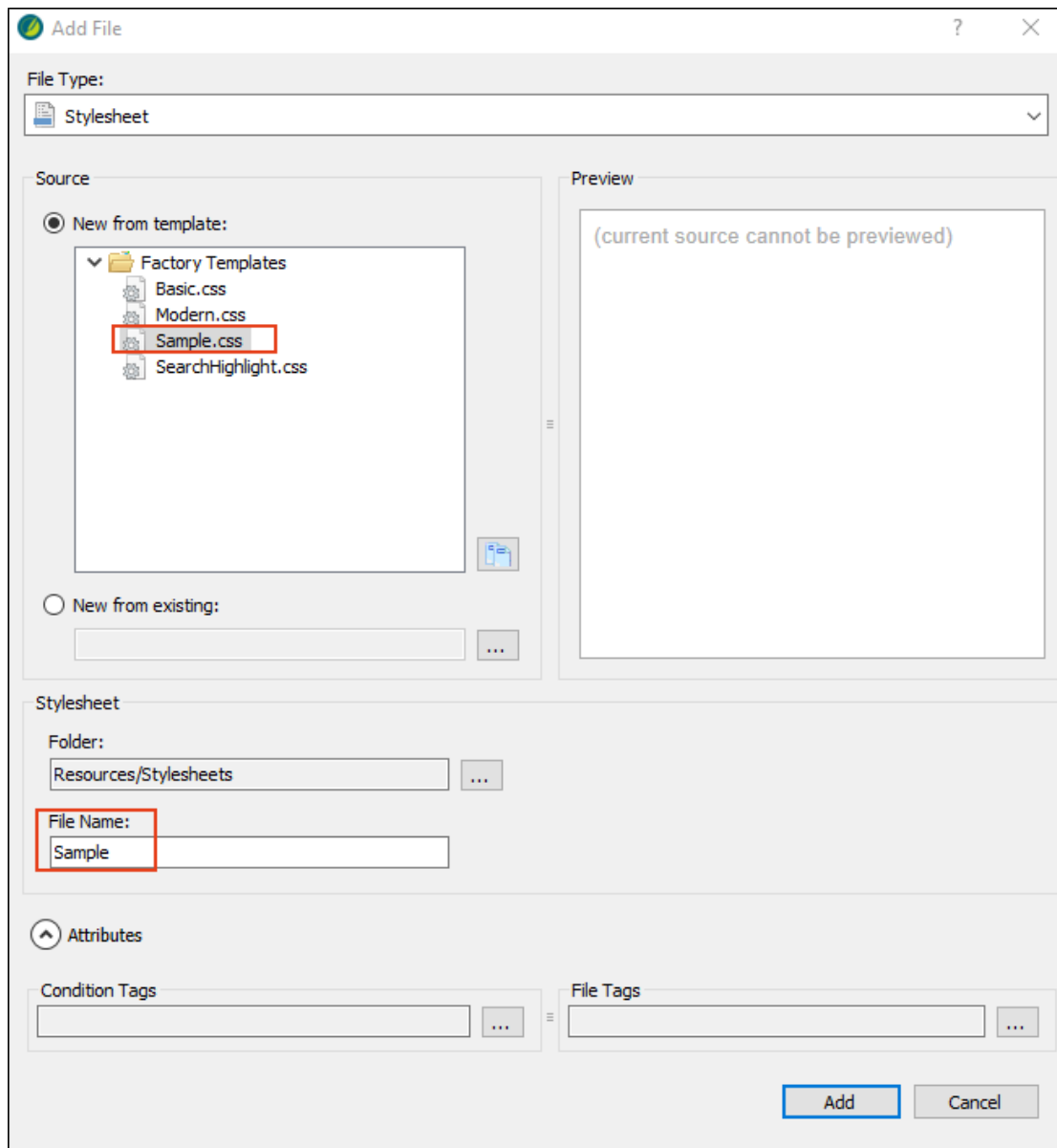
I How to Associate a Stylesheet With a File

Let's see how the online documentation would look with a different stylesheet set at the local level, for only one topic.

1. From the **Project** ribbon, select **New > Add Stylesheet**. (Selecting from the ribbon is an alternate way to add a stylesheet, instead of selecting from a context menu.)

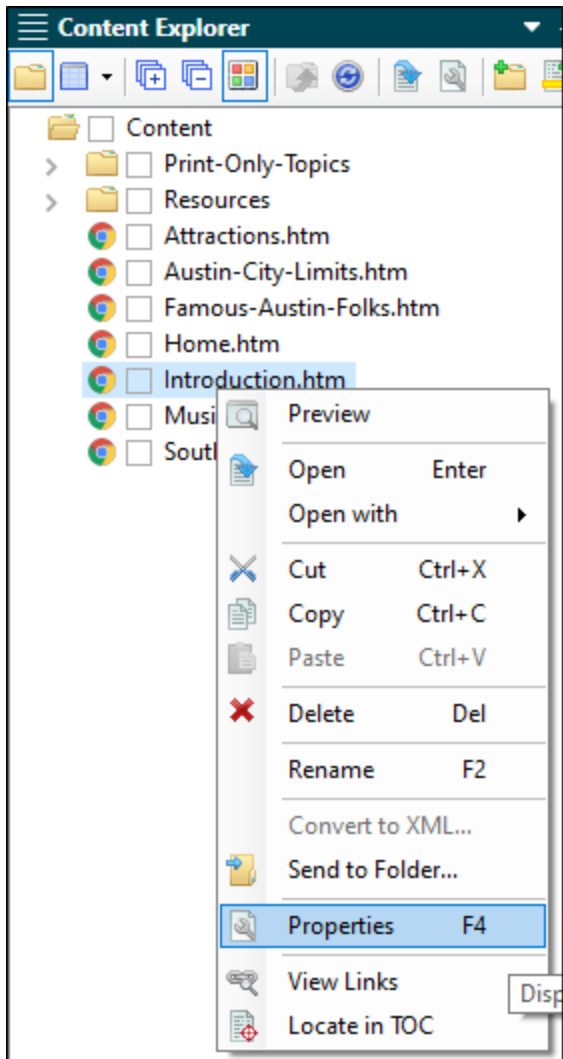


2. In the **Source** section, select **New from template**.
3. Expand the **Factory Templates** folder, and select **Sample.css**.
4. In the **Stylesheet** section, in the **File Name** field, type `Sample`.

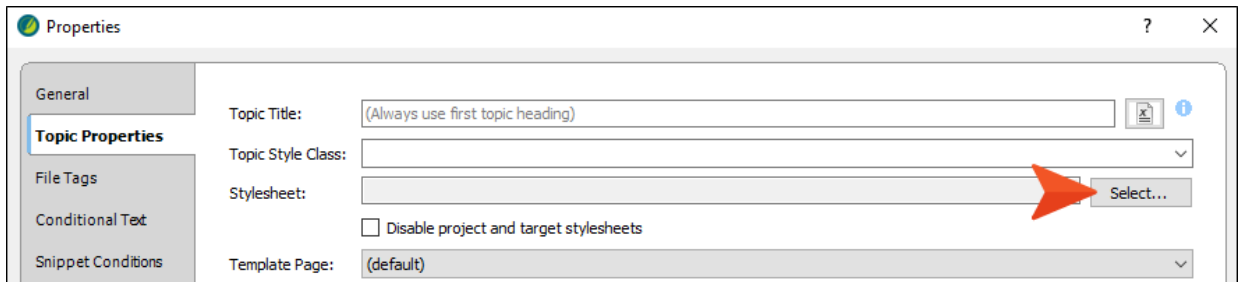


5. Click **Add**. The new stylesheet is added to the Stylesheets folder, and it opens in the Stylesheet Editor.

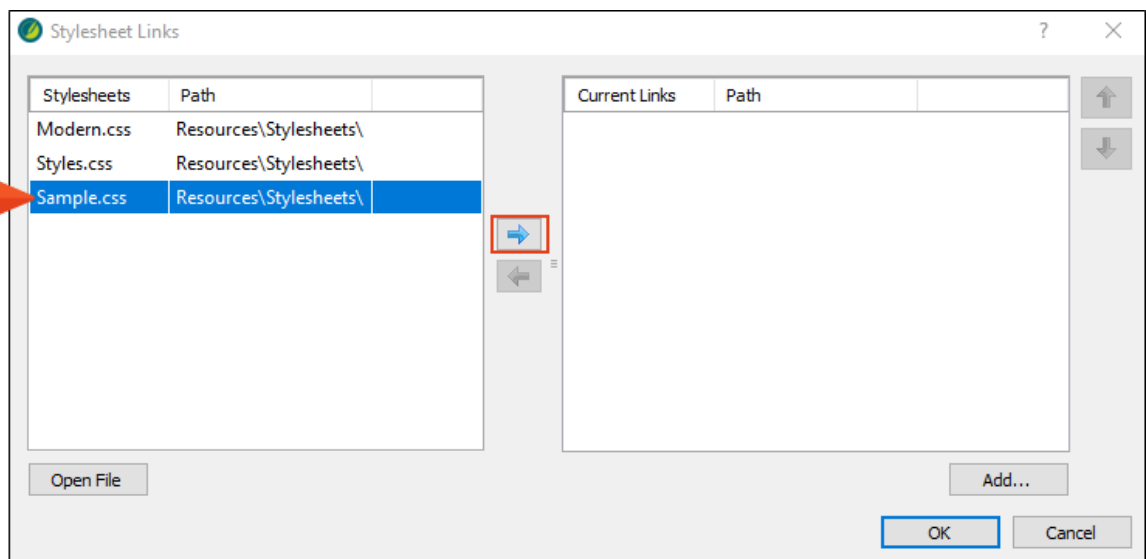
6. Open **Introduction.htm**. The modern stylesheet is still set at the project level, so the topic takes on that look and feel in the XML Editor.
7. From the Content Explorer, right-click **Introduction.htm**, and from the context menu select **Properties**. The Properties dialog opens.



8. Select the **Topic Properties** tab.
9. At the **Stylesheet** field, click the **Select** button. Remember, in the Project Properties dialog we enabled the Allow local Stylesheets option. (You have to first allow a local stylesheet, and then apply it.)

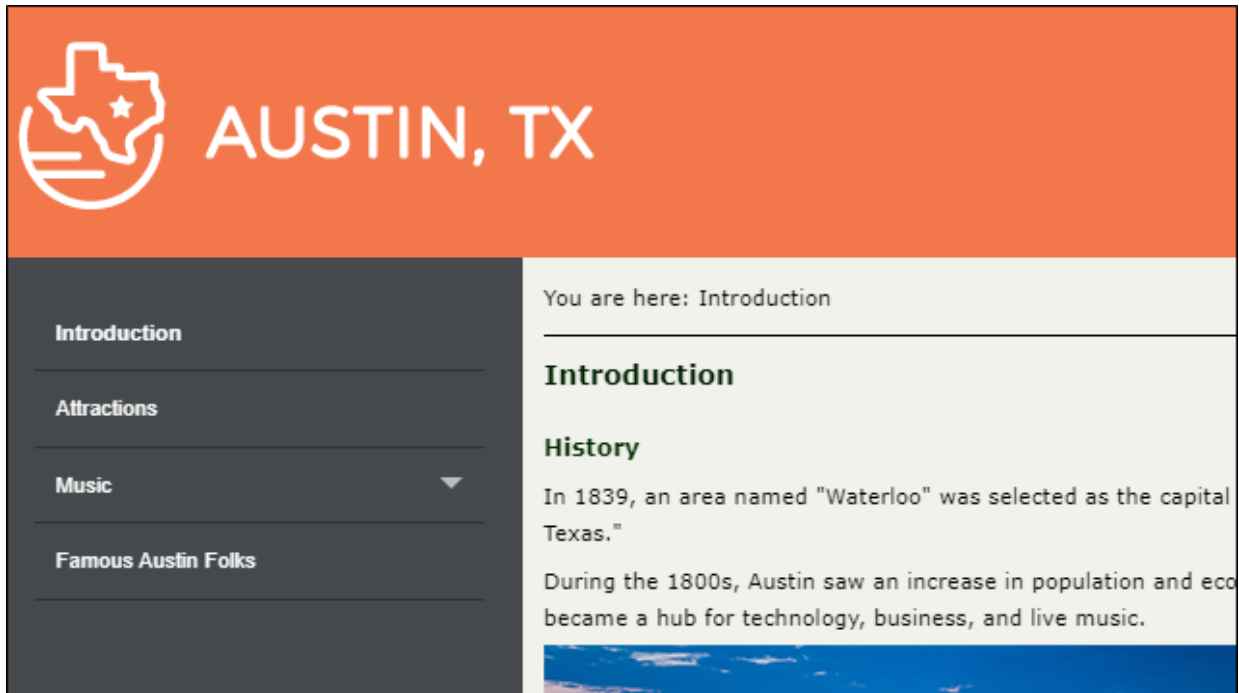


10. In the Stylesheet Links dialog, select **Sample.css**, and click the right arrow button. This moves the stylesheet over to the current links section, and links the stylesheet to the file. Click **OK**.



11. From the Properties dialog, click **OK** again. The Introduction topic takes on a new style.
12. Select the **Project** ribbon. From the **Build Primary** drop-down, select **Build All-About-Austin-HTML5**. The Builds window pane opens at the bottom of the Flare Desktop interface, and the target begins to generate. When the build finishes successfully, the Build Progress cell turns dark green.

13. Double-click the row to open the HTML5 output and view the styles in the output. The output displays topics with the modern stylesheet. The exception is the Introduction topic, which displays styles from the sample stylesheet. The local stylesheet always has precedence over the primary stylesheet.



14. From the **Window** ribbon, select **Close All Documents**.

CHAPTER 5

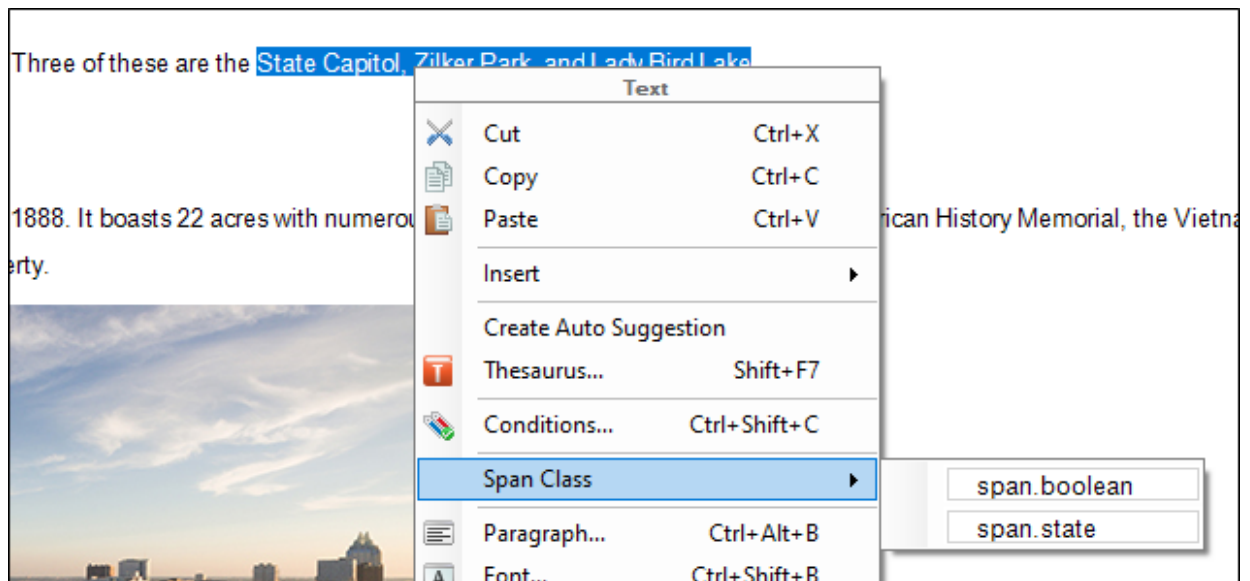
Linking Stylesheets

Linking stylesheets together is a convenient way to leverage certain styles from another stylesheet for a project. For more information see the Help system.

How to Link Stylesheets

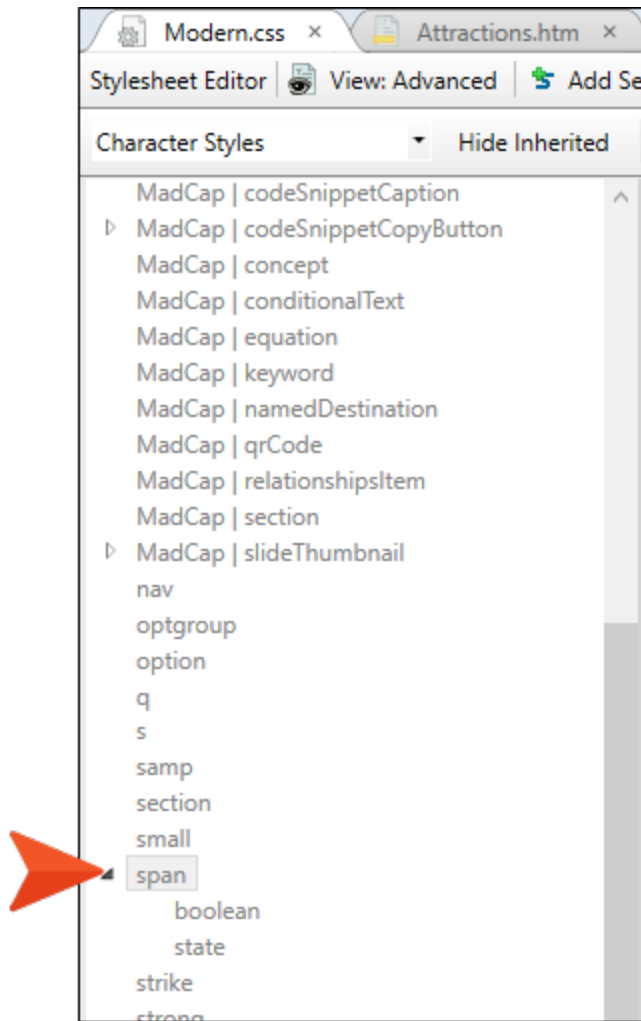
With the project stylesheet still set at Modern, let's link the original stylesheet, Styles.css, to it.

1. From the Content Explorer, open **Attractions.htm**.
2. From the first paragraph, select the text "State Capitol, Zilker Park, and Lady Bird Lake."
3. Right-click and from the context menu, hover over **Span Class**. Notice the styles available.

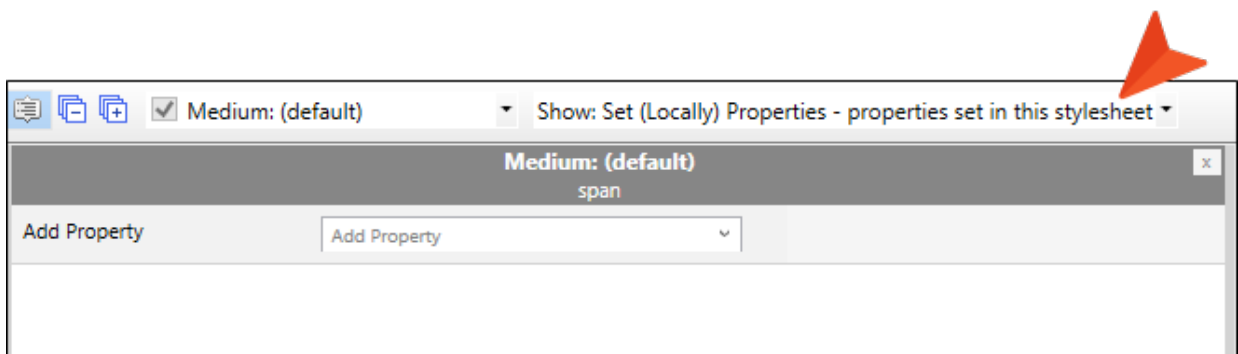


4. Open **Modern.css**.
5. In the local toolbar of the Stylesheet Editor, make sure the first button is labeled **View: Advanced**.

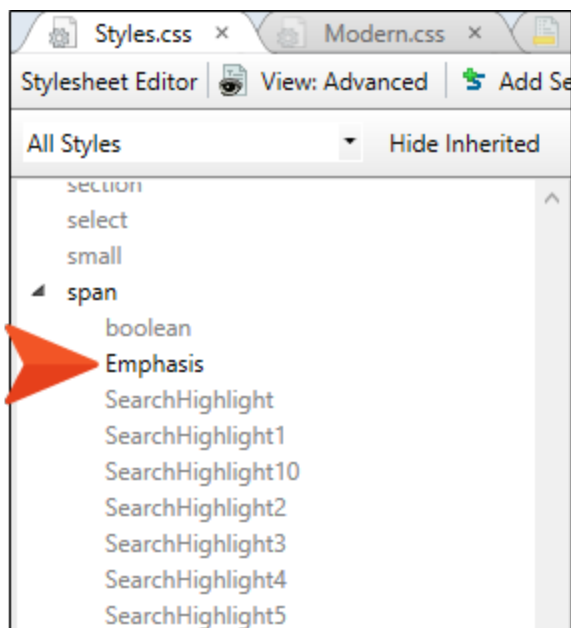
6. From the **Styles** drop-down, select **Character Styles**, and select the **span** element.



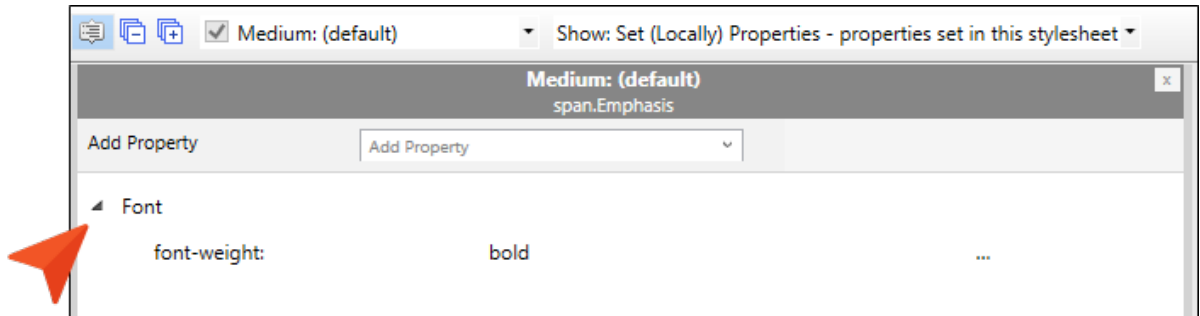
- From the local toolbar, **Show** drop-down, select **Show: Set (Locally) Properties – properties set in this stylesheet**. Notice that no property values have been defined for the span element in the Modern.css.



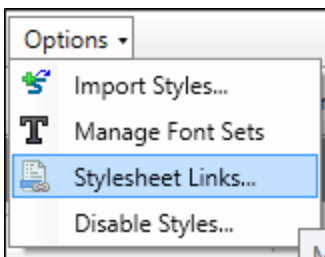
- Double-click **Styles.css**. The stylesheet opens in the Stylesheet Editor.
- Expand the **span** element and notice the Emphasis class.



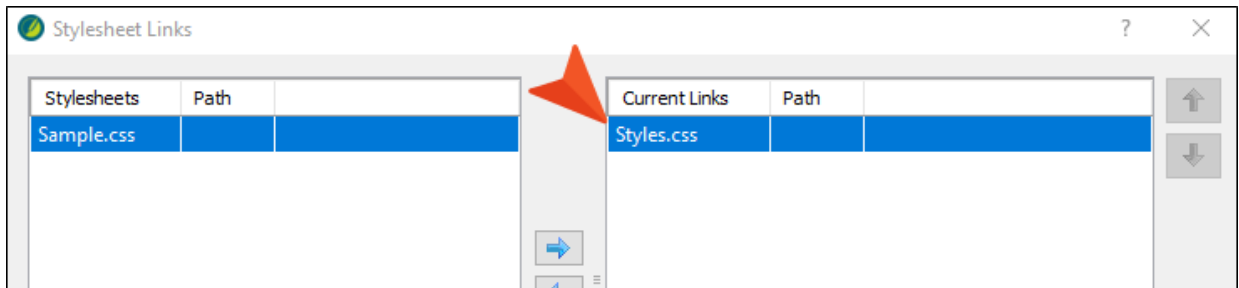
10. Select **Emphasis**, and expand the **Font** property. A span.Emphasis style class is already defined for the font property in this stylesheet. Let's link the two stylesheets together to borrow this style class.




11. Click the **Modern.css** tab.
12. From the local toolbar, select the **Options** drop-down, and then select **Stylesheet Links**.

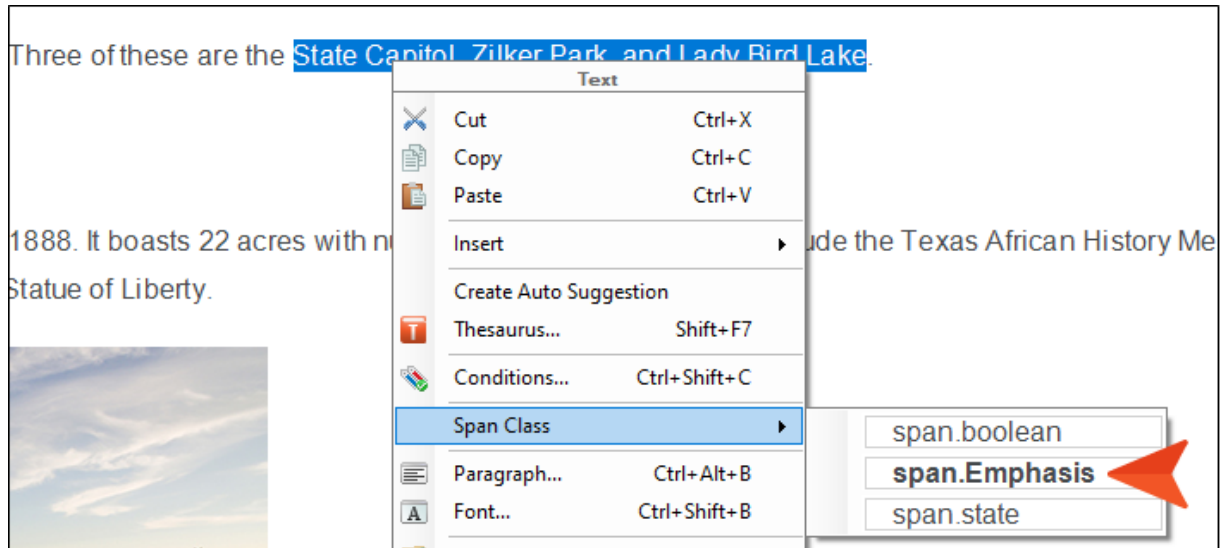



13. In the Stylesheet Links dialog, double-click the **Styles.css**. It populates to the Current Links section. Click **OK**.




14. Click  to save your work.
15. Go back to **Attractions.htm**.

16. From the selected text “State Capitol, Zilker Park, and Lady Bird Lake,” right-click to choose **Span Class**, and then select **Span.Emphasis**. This style is leveraged from the linked stylesheet.



 **NOTE** Use caution when linking stylesheets together. You might get unexpected results if you are unaware of all the styles from the linked stylesheet that may impact your main stylesheet. If linking a stylesheet to another, it is going to use its styles if it does not find explicit settings in the main stylesheet.

In this case, you might have noticed the paragraph font size increased, as well as gaining the span.Emphasis style class. The paragraph element in the Modern.css stylesheet does not have the font size value for the font property specifically set, so it is inheriting its setting from somewhere else. When we linked Styles.css to Modern.css, the font settings from Styles.css got used.

17. Click  to save your work.
18. From the **Window** ribbon, select **Close All Documents**.

APPENDIX

PDFs

The following PDFs are available for download from the Help system.

I Tutorials

Autonumbers Tutorial

Back-to-Top Button Tutorial

Context-Sensitive Help Tutorial

Custom Toolbar Tutorial

eLearning Tutorial—Basic

eLearning Tutorial—Advanced

Getting Started Tutorial

Image Tooltips Tutorial

Lists Tutorial

Meta Tags Tutorial

Micro Content Tutorial—Basic

Micro Content Tutorial—Advanced

Responsive Output Tutorial

Single-Sourcing Tutorial

Snippet Conditions Tutorial

Styles Tutorials

Tables Tutorial

Word Import Tutorial

| Cheat Sheets

Context-Sensitive Help Cheat Sheet

Folders and Files Cheat Sheet

Learning & Development Cheat Sheet

Lists Cheat Sheet

Micro Content Cheat Sheet

Print-Based Output Cheat Sheet

Search Cheat Sheet

Shortcuts Cheat Sheet

Structure Bars Cheat Sheet

Styles Cheat Sheet

I User Guides

Accessibility Guide

Analysis and Reports Guide

Architecture Guide

Autonumbers Guide

Branding Guide

Condition Tags Guide

Context-Sensitive Help Guide

Eclipse Help Guide

eLearning Guide

*Flare Online Integration
Guide*

Getting Started Guide

Global Project Linking Guide

HTML5 Guide

Images Guide

Import Guide

Indexing Guide

Key Features Guide

Lists Guide

Meta Tags Guide

Micro Content Guide

Navigation Links Guide

Plug-In API Guide

Print-Based Output Guide

Project Creation Guide

QR Codes Guide

*Reviews & Contributions With
Contributor Guide*

Scripting Guide

Search Guide

SharePoint Guide

Skins Guide

Snippets Guide

Source Control Guide: Git

*Source Control Guide:
Perforce Helix Core*

*Source Control Guide:
Subversion*

*Source Control Guide: Team
Foundation Server*

Styles Guide

Tables Guide

Tables of Contents Guide

Targets Guide

Template Pages Guide

Templates Guide

Topics Guide

Touring the Workspace Guide

*Transition From FrameMaker
Guide*

*Translation and Localization
Guide*

Variables Guide

Videos Guide

What's New Guide