

jQuery Variables

Hello and welcome to the lesson about jQuery variables. In this short lesson I would like to explain what a variable is and how we can use it when writing our jQuery code. So a variable is basically a container for information and variables can store numbers they can store sentences, words, basically whatever you want them to actually store.

Creating a variable

You would create a variable anytime you want to use a certain information in the future. So to create a variable you would simply start by typing `var` and then space and then variable name. So I'm just going to name it `sampleVar` - it doesn't really matter how you name it. You can basically use any symbols except for spaces maybe, but after that you would add a space equals space and then you would basically put anything you want this to equal, you would put after that space here. If you want your variable to be a number you would just type a number and then semicolon to end that declaration. And if you want this to be a word or a sentence you would need to put that in the quotes. So I'm just going to use the word "Hello!" here as my variable text. Now, this equals the word "hello" and exclamation point. Whenever I use the `sampleVar` in my code later on it will basically mean "Hello!".

Alerting a variable

So let's try with a simple alert function. And normally if we want to alert some text we would add quotes inside that alert function, but if we are

a variable we don't need these quotes - so `sampleVar`. Let's save that now. If I refresh the JavaScript alert pops up with my word "Hello". Okay, so let's try this with a number. Let's say - let me comment this out - let's say I have a variable one, okay? And it equals a number one. And another variable named two that equals two, okay? And now my alert, I could alert one, my one variable, and then plus, and then two, and let's see what that does? If I refresh - now it does that calculation for me, it alerted number three right? So what if that would be in quotes? Because numbers are without quotes, but if I put these numbers in quotes here - the browser will consider this as text. And now if I refresh - my alert basically connected these two together - so it's 1, 2, 12. When it sees a variable as text it won't do any mathematical logic here.

Storing selectors as variables

Okay, so how is that useful for us? Yes, you can store different values within your jQuery code for number of different reasons, but you can also store your selectors as your variables. So let's see. We could define a variable with the name `paragraph` and that could equal my exact selector. It could be more specific, I could select something, you know, which is a parent of something and then it doesn't has a certain class, right? And be very specific do this complex selector here and then specify it as a variable, and the next time I use it I don't need to specify the selector I can just use it as a variable. And popular method of naming that selector is to use the dollar symbol - here, when we are specifying a jQuery object basically. It's not required or anything, it's just a common practice that when you're defining a variable which is actually a selector, an object in jQuery you would name it starting with the dollar sign. And then if I want to do something with that so, I don't have anything like that, but just a simple `P`, if I want to do something with that element I do

not need to target it like I normally would I could use just a simple paragraph, value, and then do something with it. So let's try changing its text. I could actually, okay, let's start with simple so, 'this is new', right? So now I'm changing the text of that variable, of that selector, if I refresh - it changes. I could not only use it as my selectors but I can use variables anywhere inside my jQuery code. So, I could instead of any text here, I could also insert my variable, my sampleVar. Let's save that, and now it says: Hello! Okay, so that's the double use of variables, but hopefully you see how we can use it. And a very important thing to note is that anytime you want to select and you're targeting a thing and you're doing something, some jQuery on that particular selector, and you know you'll be using it many times - it's always best to define it as a variable. This way the browser will only need to look for that selector once, it will store it as a variable and anytime you use it it doesn't have to, you know, search for the DOM, search through your document to find all the piece because it already found it and saved it as a variable. You won't always be able to use chaining and just, you know, add all the events to a selector like I explained in the previous lessons. Sometimes you want to use the same selector over and over again in different places, not only to attach different methods to it, and that is when storing it as a variable first will make your code basically work faster for you. So it is useful to define your variables whenever you want to use something multiple times.

Global and local variables

And we have two types of variables: global and local variables. Global variable would be just like the ones I listed here in the main document ready function. If I specify a variable I can access it anywhere inside my code. But if I'm already within inside a different function like a click

event and I specify my variable inside that function it's only available within the function, that would make it a local variable. So just be mindful that if the variable isn't on that global level you might not be able to access it later on if it's inside the function.

That's basically all the information I think it's relevant when working with variables inside your jQuery code, I hope it's helpful.