How can I format all of my tables the same way with CSS?

Last modified on 11/05/2026 3:09 pm EST

Context

The tables in your articles don't look consistent. Some have borders and others don't, fonts and font sizes differ, header rows aren't styled, or wide tables run off the edge of the page. This is common when tables are created in the article editor, imported from another tool, or copied and pasted from Word, Excel, or Google Docs, because pasted tables bring their own fonts, colors, and column widths with them.

You want every table in your knowledge base to use the same header, cell background colors, font colors, and font sizes. You can set this once in your Custom CSS and it applies to every article. This feature is available on select plans.

Check the published article
The article editor can show a table differently than readers see it. After you save your CSS, check a published article that has a table.

Resolution

Add the table CSS

1. Go to **Customize > Style (HTML & CSS)**.
2. In the **Customize HTML, CSS, and JS** section, select **Custom CSS**.
3. Scroll to the bottom of your Custom CSS and paste in the CSS below. Adding it at the bottom lets it take priority over earlier rules.

```
/* ===== Default table styles ===== */
.hg-article-body {
  --table-border-color: #d0d7de;
  --table-header-bg: #1f4e79;
  --table-header-color: #ffffff;
  --table-stripe-bg: #f4f7fa;
  --table-cell-padding: 8px 12px;
  --table-font-size: 15px;
}
```

Copyright © 2015 – 2025 Silly Moose, LLC. All rights reserved.
Powered by KnowledgeOwl knowledge base software.

```
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table) {
  width: 100%;
  max-width: 100%;
  margin: 1em 0;
  border-collapse: collapse;
  border: 1px solid var(--table-border-color);
  font-size: var(--table-font-size);
}

/* Cells */
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table) > :is(thead, tbody, tfoot) > tr > :is(th, td) {
  padding: var(--table-cell-padding);
  border: 1px solid var(--table-border-color);
  vertical-align: top;
  text-align: left;
  line-height: 1.4;
}

/* Header cells */
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table) > :is(thead, tbody, tfoot) > tr > th {
  background-color: var(--table-header-bg);
  color: var(--table-header-color);
  font-weight: 600;
}

/* Alternating row colors */
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table) > tbody > tr:nth-child(even) > td {
  background-color: var(--table-stripe-bg);
}

/* Remove extra space around paragraphs inside cells */
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table) :is(th, td) > p {
  margin: 0 0 0.5em;
}
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table) :is(th, td) > p:last-child {
  margin-bottom: 0;
}

/* ===== Tables pasted from Word, Excel, or Google Docs ===== */
/* Replace the fixed widths, fonts, and colors that come along with pasted tables.
   This also overrides colors you applied on purpose. Delete the color lines
   if you want to keep highlighted cells. */
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table)[style],
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table)[width] {
  width: 100% !important;
  height: auto !important;
}
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table) col {
  width: auto !important;
}
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table) :is(th, td)[style],
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table) :is(th, td)[width],
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table) :is(th, td) :is(p, span, div, font)[style] {
  width: auto !important;
  height: auto !important;
  font-family: inherit !important;
  font-size: inherit !important;
  line-height: inherit !important;
}
```

Copyright © 2015 – 2025 Silly Moose, LLC. All rights reserved.
Powered by KnowledgeOwl knowledge base software.

```
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table) td[style],
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table) td :is(p, span, div, font)[style] {
  color: inherit !important;
  background-color: transparent !important;
}
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table) > tbody > tr:nth-child(even) > td[style] {
  background-color: var(--table-stripe-bg) !important;
}
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table) th[style],
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table) th :is(p, span, div, font)[style] {
  color: var(--table-header-color) !important;
  background-color: var(--table-header-bg) !important;
}
```

4. Change the colors, font size, and spacing in the lines that start with `--table-` at the top. Refer to Change how your tables look for what each setting does.
5. Select **Update Preview** and look at an article that has a table.
6. **Save** your changes.

This CSS styles every table in your articles, including tables pasted from other tools. The last section of the CSS replaces fixed widths, fonts, and colors that pasted tables bring with them. It also replaces colors you applied to cells on purpose, so delete the lines that set `color` and `background-color` in that section if you want to keep highlighted cells.

Change how your tables look

Edit the CSS you pasted in to change these table settings:

To change	Edit
Header background color	`--table-header-bg`
Header text color	`--table-header-color`
Border color	`--table-border-color`
Alternating row color	`--table-stripe-bg`. Set it to `transparent` to turn off the alternating colors.
Font size	`--table-font-size`
Space inside cells	`--table-cell-padding`
Font color for cells	Add `color: #333333;` to the first rule, the one that starts with `.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table) {`.
Font family	Add `font-family: Georgia, serif;` to the same first rule. Without it, tables use your theme's font.

Copyright © 2015 – 2025 Silly Moose, LLC. All rights reserved.
Powered by KnowledgeOwl knowledge base software.

To change	Edit
Background color for cells	Add `background-color: #ffffff;` to the cells rule, the one with `padding: var(--table-cell-padding);`.
Text alignment in cells	Change `text-align: left;` in the cells rule.

Leave a table unstyled

The CSS skips any table that has the class `plain-table`. Use this for tables you use for layout, such as placing images side by side. Open the article's code view and add the class to the table tag, like `<table class="plain-table">`. If the table already has a class, add `plain-table` to the list.

Make one wide table scroll or shrink its font

If a table has too many columns to fit in the article, add a class to that table so it scrolls sideways instead of running off the page. You can also shrink the font for just that table. Add this CSS below the table CSS above, because it needs to come after it.

```
/* ===== Per-table classes: wide-table and small-table ===== */
/* Add class="wide-table" to a table that is too wide to fit in the article.
   The table scrolls sideways inside the article. Columns are at least 100px wide;
   change that number to make columns narrower or wider. */
.hg-article-body table.wide-table {
  display: block;
  width: max-content !important;
  max-width: 100%;
  overflow-x: auto;
  border: 0 !important;
}
.hg-article-body table.wide-table :is(th, td) {
  min-width: 100px;
}

/* Add class="small-table" to shrink the font in one table. Change 13px to the size you want. */
.hg-article-body table.small-table,
.hg-article-body table.small-table :is(th, td, p, span, div, font) {
  font-size: 13px !important;
}
```

Then add the class to the table:

1. Open the article's code view.
2. Find the `<table>` tag for the table and add the class, like `<table class="wide-table">`. To use both classes, add both, like `<table class="wide-table small-table">`. If the table already has a class, add the new class to the list, like `class="table table-bordered wide-table"`.
3. Save your changes.

Copyright © 2015 – 2025 Silly Moose, LLC. All rights reserved.
Powered by KnowledgeOwl knowledge base software.

A wide table is only as wide as its columns need and scrolls sideways inside the article. Each column is at least 100px wide, so long text in a cell wraps at that width. Change `min-width: 100px` if you want wider or narrower columns. To make every wide table scroll without adding a class, use the next option.

Make all wide tables scroll

By default, a table with many columns can run past the edge of your article. To make every wide table scroll sideways instead, without adding a class, add this CSS below the table CSS. With this CSS, tables are only as wide as their content, up to the width of the article.

```
/* ===== Option: wide tables scroll sideways instead of running off the page ===== */
/* Tables only grow as wide as their content, up to the width of the article. */
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table) {
  display: block;
  width: max-content !important;
  max-width: 100%;
  overflow-x: auto;
  border: 0 !important;
}
```

Style the first row as a header

Tables pasted from Word or Excel often don't have header cells, so the first row looks like any other row. Add this CSS to style the first row of those tables as a header. It uses `:has()`, which current versions of Chrome, Edge, Firefox, and Safari support.

```
/* ===== Option: style the first row as the header when a table has no header cells ===== */
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table):not(:has(th)) > tbody > tr:first-child > td {
  background-color: var(--table-header-bg) !important;
  color: var(--table-header-color) !important;
  font-weight: 600;
}
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table):not(:has(th)) > tbody > tr:first-child > td * {
  color: var(--table-header-color) !important;
}
```

Keep the first column in view

If you use the scrolling CSS above, you can keep the first column in place while readers scroll sideways. Add this CSS below the scrolling CSS.

Copyright © 2015 – 2025 Silly Moose, LLC. All rights reserved.
Powered by KnowledgeOwl knowledge base software.

```
/* ===== Option: keep the first column in view when a wide table scrolls (use with the scrolling option) ===== */
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table) > :is(thead, tbody) > tr > :is(th, td):first-child {
  position: sticky;
  left: 0;
  z-index: 1;
}
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table) > tbody > tr > td:first-child {
  background-color: #ffffff !important;
}
.hg-article-body table:not(.plain-table) > tbody > tr:nth-child(even) > td:first-child {
  background-color: var(--table-stripe-bg) !important;
}
```

Show readers that a table scrolls

In some browsers, the scrollbar under a wide table only appears when readers hover over the table, so they may not notice there's more to see. This CSS fades out the cut-off edge of a scrolling table. As readers scroll, the fade moves to the other edge, and it disappears once they reach the end. It also works on tables with colored cells. Add it below the wide-table CSS.

Copyright © 2015 – 2025 Silly Moose, LLC. All rights reserved.
Powered by KnowledgeOwl knowledge base software.

```
/* ===== Option: show that a wide table scrolls (use with the wide-table class) ===== */
/* The cut-off edge of a scrolling table fades out, and the fade moves as readers scroll. */
@property --table-fade-left {
  syntax: "<length>";
  inherits: false;
  initial-value: 0px;
}
@property --table-fade-right {
  syntax: "<length>";
  inherits: false;
  initial-value: 0px;
}
@keyframes table-scroll-fade {
  0%   { --table-fade-left: 0px;  --table-fade-right: 56px; }
  8%   { --table-fade-left: 56px; }
  92%  { --table-fade-right: 56px; }
  100% { --table-fade-left: 56px; --table-fade-right: 0px; }
}
@supports (animation-timeline: scroll()) {
  .hg-article-body table.wide-table {
    mask-image:
      linear-gradient(to right, transparent, #000 var(--table-fade-left), #000 calc(100% - var(--table-fade-right)),
transparent),
      linear-gradient(#000, #000);
    mask-size: 100% calc(100% - 10px), 100% 10px;
    mask-position: top, bottom;
    mask-repeat: no-repeat;
    animation: table-scroll-fade linear both;
    animation-timeline: scroll(self inline);
  }
}

/* A scrollbar that's always visible under a wide table in Chrome, Edge, and Safari.
   Change the two colors to match your theme. */
.hg-article-body table.wide-table::-webkit-scrollbar {
  height: 10px;
}
.hg-article-body table.wide-table::-webkit-scrollbar-track {
  background: #eeeeee;
  border-radius: 5px;
}
.hg-article-body table.wide-table::-webkit-scrollbar-thumb {
  background: #999999;
  border-radius: 5px;
}
```

The fade shows in browsers that support scroll-driven animations, which current versions of Chrome, Edge, Firefox, and Safari do. Older browsers still scroll the table, just without the fade. A table that fits in the article doesn't fade.

- **To make the fade wider or narrower, change every `56px`.**
- **If you use Make all wide tables scroll instead of the `wide-table` class, change `table.wide-table` to `table:not(.plain-table)` in all four places.**
- **If you also keep the first column in view, change `--table-fade-left: 56px` to `--table-fade-left: 0px` in both places, so the first column doesn't fade.**

Copyright © 2015 – 2025 Silly Moose, LLC. All rights reserved.
Powered by KnowledgeOwl knowledge base software.

Troubleshoot table styles

- **A wide table is cut off or runs off the page:** Add the `wide-table` class to that table so it scrolls sideways.
- **Readers don't notice that a table scrolls:** Add the CSS in Show readers that a table scrolls.
- **Some tables still look different:** The article may have its own `<style>` tag or inline styles, which can come along when you paste from another editor. Open the article's code view, look for a `<style>` tag, and remove the table rules in it.
- **Table text is too small or won't wrap:** Your Custom CSS may already have an older table rule, such as `body table td`, that sets a font size or stops wrapping. Select **Find** in the Custom CSS editor or use Ctrl+F (Command+F on a Mac) to search for `table`, then remove or update the older rule.
- **The CSS doesn't change anything:** Make sure you pasted it in **Custom CSS**, not Custom HTML. The CSS targets the `hg-article-body` class, which is in the standard article layout, so a customized **Article** HTML template may need a different selector.

If your tables still don't look right, contact us and send us a link to an article with a table that looks wrong.

Background

Tables get their formatting from several places. The article editor's table properties, such as **Bordered Table**, style one table at a time. Tables from imports or pasted content bring their own formatting as inline styles. Custom CSS styles every table in your knowledge base at once, and the `!important` rules in the pasted tables section are what let it override that inline formatting.

Refer to Customize style or layout with HTML/CSS for more about editing your Custom CSS. If you want to start over, Default Custom CSS has the original CSS to copy back in.

Copyright © 2015 – 2025 Silly Moose, LLC. All rights reserved.
Powered by KnowledgeOwl knowledge base software.