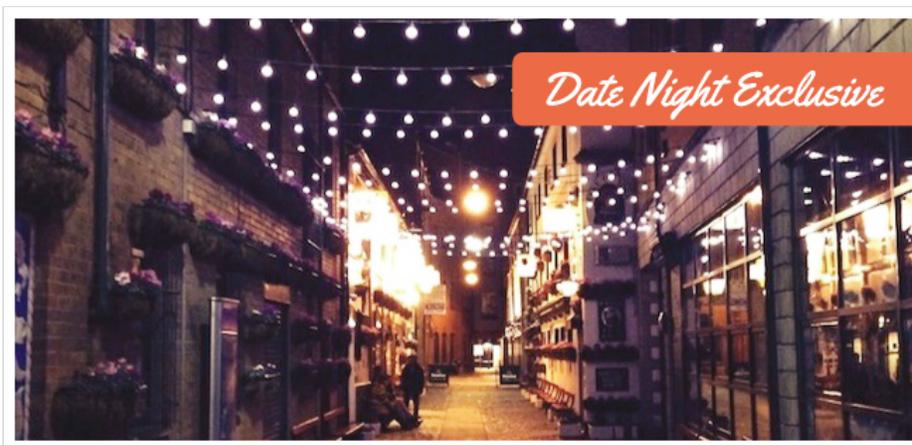## Exercise Preview

Exercise Overview

This is the first of a two-part exercise where you'll create a simple 1-column responsive email that works well everywhere: in desktop mail applications, webmail, and mobile devices. In this exercise we'll focus on coding up the structure for a simple desktop email. In the following exercise, we'll style the content and tweak the code so the content looks spiffy and fits nicely on any screen.

Previewing the Finished Product

1. Navigate to **Desktop > Class Files > yourname-Responsive Email Class > Simple Responsive Layout**.

   NOTE: All the folders you need for the exercises in this workbook are located in the **yourname-Responsive Email Class** folder.

2. **Ctrl–click** (Mac) or **Right–click** (Windows) on **date-night-finished.html**, go to **Open with** and select your favorite browser.

   As you can see, this is a simple 1-column email. This is by far the easiest format to make work well on any screen size and across platforms and devices. It looks good on the desktop, but what about mobile?

3. Resize the browser window, making it smaller, to see what the email will look like on a mobile device. The email shrinks down nicely to fit the smaller browser width. Perfect!

4. Close the browser window.

Getting Started

1. In a code editor (such as Sublime Text, Dreamweaver, TextMate, Coda, etc.) open **date-night-feb-14.html** from the **Simple Responsive Layout** folder.

   NOTE: If your code editor allows you to open an entire folder (like Sublime Text does), open the entire **Simple Responsive Layout** folder.

2. Title the document by editing the code as follows:

```
<!doctype html>
<html lang="en">
<head>
    <meta charset="UTF-8">
    <title>Date Night Exclusive - February 14</title>
</head>
<body>

</body>
</html>
```

Coding the Outer Table

Even though we're using a more modern approach to email by making it responsive, we still have to structure the content in tables for it to work across the most popular email clients. We'll create an outer table for the header image that will be the full width of the email. We will then put the text-based content into an inner table, where we'll create a bit more space to make sure it's legible across email clients.

1. To create the outer table, add the following bold code inside the **<body>** tag. In Sublime Text (with Emmet installed), you can simply type **table+** and hit **Tab** to expand to the full table code with table rows and cells you see below.

```
<body>
    <table>
        <tr>
            <td>

            </td>
        </tr>
    </table>
</body>
```

NOTE: If you used the shortcut, we recommend separating the opening and closing <td> tags now, since we'll add content in between these tags shortly.

2. We want a super basic center-aligned table with default cellpadding and cellspacing stripped out. Add these bold attributes to the **<table>** tag:

```
<table align="center" cellpadding="0" cellspacing="0">
```

3. To see our table structure in the browser as we build the layout, let's temporarily add a 1-pixel border. Add the following attribute to the **<table>** tag:

```
<table align="center" cellpadding="0" cellspacing="0" border="1">
```

4. Let's make this table **640** pixels wide. Add the **width** attribute as well:

```
<table align="center" cellpadding="0" cellspacing="0" border="1" width="640">
```

The outer table is the only part of a responsive email that has a fixed width. We'll use percentages for the rest of the width attributes. We would only need to change the width on this outermost table in order to adjust everything inside it.

5. Align the contents of the <td> to the **center** and make the cell the **entire width** of the table (currently 640px) by adding the following bold attributes:

```
<table align="center" border="1" cellpadding="0" cellspacing="0" width="640">
   <tr>
      <td align="center" width="100%">

      </td>
   </tr>
</table>
```

6. Save the file.

Placing the Header Image

1. To save you some time, we created a snippet of prepared content for you. In your code editor, open **header-image.html** from **Simple Responsive Layout > snippets**.

2. Copy all the code.

3. Close the file. You should now be back in **date-night-feb-14.html**.

4. Around line 11, paste the content inside the **<td>** tag like so:

```
<td align="center" width="100%">
   <img src="http://www.nobledesktop.com/nl-date-night/img/lights-on-
street.jpg" width="640" alt="Date Night Exclusives">
</td>
```

NOTE: We uploaded this image file to our server. When you code your own HTML emails, you'll need to host images on your server or on your email marketing service's server. You cannot use relative image links in an email.

5. Save the file.

6. Preview **date-night-feb-14.html** in a browser.

The image is sitting nicely inside the outer table. There's a bit of a gap below the image, but we'll address that issue shortly.

> **Browser Preview Shortcuts**
>
> If you are using Sublime Text with **SideBarEnhancements** installed and have set your user key bindings in the **Before You Begin** section at the beginning of the workbook, hit **F12** (or **fn–F12** depending on your keyboard settings) to open the saved HTML document in your default browser.
>
> NOTE: This will typically not work on the Mac unless you change or disable the **Show Dashboard** keyboard shortcut in **System Preferences > Keyboard** (or **Mission Control**).
>
> If you are using Dreamweaver, go to **File > Preview in Browser**.

NOTE: If your code editor doesn't have a shortcut for previewing, navigate to **Desktop > Class Files > yourname-Responsive Email Class > Simple Responsive Layout** and **Ctrl–click** (Mac) or **Right–click** (Windows) on **date-night-feb-14.html**, go to **Open with**, and select your favorite browser.

7. We recommend leaving the file open in your browser as you work, so you can simply reload the page to see the changes you make in your code.

Nesting the Inner Table

1. Let's add the second table for the text-based content. Return to **date-night-feb-14.html** in your code editor.

2. Around line 8, **copy** the entire **\<table>** tag with all its attributes.

3. Paste it below the **img**, as shown in bold below.

```
<tr>
   <td align="center" width="100%">
      <img src="http://www.nobledesktop.com/nl-date-night/img/lights-on-
street.jpg" width="640" alt="Date Night Exclusives">
      <table align="center" cellpadding="0" cellspacing="0" border="1"
width="640">
   </td>
</tr>
```

4. As shown in bold, change the fixed **width** to a relative width so the table will be 100% of the width of the outer parent table:

```
<table align="center" cellpadding="0" cellspacing="0" border="1" width="100%">
```

5. Add the remaining structure for the second table, as shown in bold:

```
<td align="center" width="100%">
    <img src="http://www.nobledesktop.com/nl-date-night/img/lights-on-
    street.jpg" width="640" alt="Date Night Exclusives">
    <table align="center" cellpadding="0" cellspacing="0" border="1"
width="100%">
        <tr>
            <td>
            </td>
        </tr>
    </table>
</td>
```

6. We'll soon place text inside this new table's cell, and we want it aligned to the left. Add these bold attributes to the **td**:

```
<tr>
    <td align="left" width="100%">
    </td>
</tr>
```

7. Save the file.

Adding the Remaining Content

To save you some time, we put the content in a snippet we prepared for you.

1. In your code editor, open **email-text.html** from the **snippets** folder.

2. Copy all the code.

3. Close the file. You should now be back in **date-night-feb-14.html**.

4. Around line 15, paste the content like so (In Sublime Text, hit **Cmd–Shift–V** (Mac) or **Ctrl–Shift–V** (Windows) to paste with indentation.):

```
<td align="left" width="100%">
    <h1>Take a Night Out This Weekend</h1>
    <p>Our treat&mdash;when you become a premium member.</p>
        <p>&bull; Unique romantic experiences</p>
        <p>&bull; Pre-planned dates&mdash;just sign up!</p>
        <p>&bull; Discounts on every date</p>
        <p>&bull; FREE selection of dates weekly</p>
        <p>&bull; Access to special coupons</p>
    <p>Premium members receive one free date every month as well as access to
the best value on exclusive dates. We know you're busy, so we do all the
planning for the two of you. Make your weekends special with our creative and
adventurous dates!</p>
</td>
```

5. Save the file.

6. Preview **date-night-feb-14.html** in a browser.

7. Take a moment to note the table-within-a-table structure of the layout. While we're here, let's also take this time to address the issue of the small gap below the header image. Why is it there?

   The gap is there because images are displayed **inline** and rendered quite like text, even though they're obviously not text. By default, text (and images) are vertically aligned to the text baseline (where the bottom of each letter is positioned as you would when writing on lined paper). The baseline makes sense for text that has lowercase characters like j and g. However, for images, which don't have descenders, it creates extra, unfilled space below them.

   Luckily, there's an easy fix for this issue. We can tell the browser to render images as **block** elements rather than **inline** elements. Block-level elements do not share the issue of being aligned to the text baseline.

8. Return to your code editor.

9. Under the **title** around line 5, add the following **<style>** tag that will hold all our CSS rules:

   ```
   <head>
       <meta charset="UTF-8">
       <title>Date Night Exclusive - February 14</title>
       <style>

       </style>
   </head>
   ```

   NOTE: Although styles must be inline in order for the newsletter to render correctly in all email clients, you can easily convert embedded styles to inline styles. Most email marketing services offer this as part of the "preflight" process of sending an email campaign. We'll take a closer look at this process a bit later in the workbook.

10. Add a rule for the **img** tag, as follows:

    ```
    <style>
        img {
            display: block;
        }
    </style>
    ```

11. Save your file, return to the browser and reload the page. The gap has been closed!

12. Now that we know how these nested tables work, we can get rid of the unsightly borders. Return to your code editor.

13. Remove the **borders** from both tables by setting them to **zero**, as shown below
    in bold:

```
<table align="center" cellpadding="0" cellspacing="0" border="0" width="640">
   <tr>
      <td align="center" width="100%">
         <img src="http://www.nobledesktop.com/nl-date-night/img/lights-on-
street.jpg" width="640" alt="Date Night Exclusives">
            <table align="center" cellpadding="0" cellspacing="0" border="0"
width="100%">
```

14. Save the file and reload the browser to see the streamlined layout. Better—but the
    content is a bit drab.

15. Keep your file open in your code editor as well as the browser. We'll continue to add
    styles to the content in the next exercise.

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