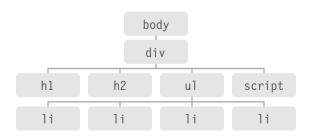
ACCESSING ELEMENTS

DOM gueries may return one element, or they may return a NodeList, which is a collection of nodes

Sometimes you will just want to access one individual element (or a fragment of the page that is stored within that one element). Other times you may want to select a group of elements, for example, every <h1> element in the page or every <1 i> element within a particular list.

Here, the DOM tree shows the body of the page of the list example. We focus on accessing elements first so it only shows element nodes. The diagrams in the coming pages highlight which elements a DOM guery would return. (Remember, element nodes are the DOM representation of an element.)



GROUPS OF FLEMENT NODES

If a method can return more than one node, it will always return a **NodeList**, which is a **collection** of nodes (even if it only finds one matching element). You then need to select the element you want from this list using an index number (which means the numbering starts at 0 like the items in an array).

For example, several elements can have the same tag name, so getElementsByTagName() will always return a NodeList.

FASTEST ROUTE

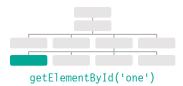
Finding the quickest way to access an element within your web page will make the page seem faster and/or more responsive. This usually means evaluating the minimum number of nodes on the way to the element you want to work with. For example, getElementById() will quickly return one element (because no two elements on the same page should have the same value for an id attribute). but it can only be used when the element you want to access has an id attribute.

METHODS THAT RETURN A SINGLE ELEMENT NODE:

getElementById('id')

Selects an individual element given the value of its id attribute. The HTML must have an id attribute in order for it to be selectable.

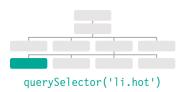
First supported: IE5.5, Opera 7, all versions of Chrome, Firefox, Safari.



querySelector('css selector')

Uses CSS selector syntax that would select one or more elements. This method returns only the first of the matching elements.

First supported: IE8, Firefox 3.5, Safari 4, Chrome 4, Opera 10

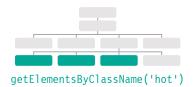


METHODS THAT RETURN ONE OR MORE ELEMENTS (AS A NODELIST):

getElementsByClassName('class')

Selects one or more elements given the value of their class attribute. The HTML must have a class attribute for it to be selectable. This method is faster than querySelectorAll().

First supported: IE9, Firefox 3, Safari 4, Chrome 4, Opera 10 (Several browsers had partial / buggy support in earlier versions)



getElementsByTagName('tagName')

Selects all elements on the page with the specified tag name. This method is faster than querySelectorAll().

First supported: IE6+, Firefox 3, Safari 4, Chrome, Opera 10 (Several browsers had partial / buggy support in earlier versions)

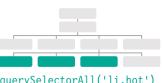


getElementsByTagName('li')

querySelectorAll('css selector')

Uses CSS selector syntax to select one or more elements and returns all of those that match.

First supported: IE8, Firefox 3.5, Safari 4, Chrome 4, Opera 10



quervSelectorAll('li.hot')