



Lesson #24

Page Templates

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Introduction & Recap

As Blog Evangelists, our one goal is to build WordPress powered web sites for our clients because it is hopeless easy to use. This means, you are using WordPress as a content management system – not so much as a stand alone. With this comes some challenges because WordPress is traditionally created as a blogging system.

Sometimes your client may request a landing page for their advertising efforts. They may want it to look different or have no sidebar distractions. The problem is, you can't have two active themes at the same time. This is when Page Templates come in super handy. We'll also review other scenarios when you could use Page Templates.

Page Template Limitation

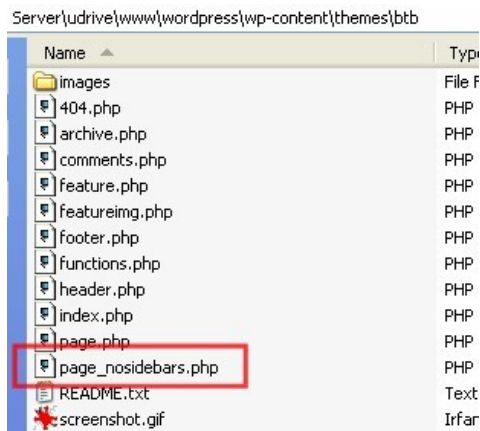
As flexible as Page Templates make WordPress, there are limitations. The biggest one being – you can only use it for Pages. Not posts. If you want posts to appear very different, you could use Conditional Tags which we covered in the last lesson.

Creating A Page With No Sidebars

Almost all traditional WordPress theme has sidebars. There are times you may want to build an opt-in page as a dedicated landing page for your ads or other marketing efforts. You do not want Sidebars to distract your leads and clutter up the screen. Here's what you can do.

Create a Page (not post). You may enter some content or leave the page empty only making sure to give it a title maybe something like Page Template Test. Save it. I highly encourage you to add some dummy text which you can get from lipsum.com so you can see what is going on as you work. The object of this page is to provide you with something to apply the Page Template while you work out the Page Template design. It is not meant for public view so do not publish it.

Next, open PsPad, create a new blank .php file and name it whatever you wish. I generally like to name the file something like page_name.php. For the purpose of this lesson, I'm going to name mine page_nosidebars.php. Then save this file in the theme folder.



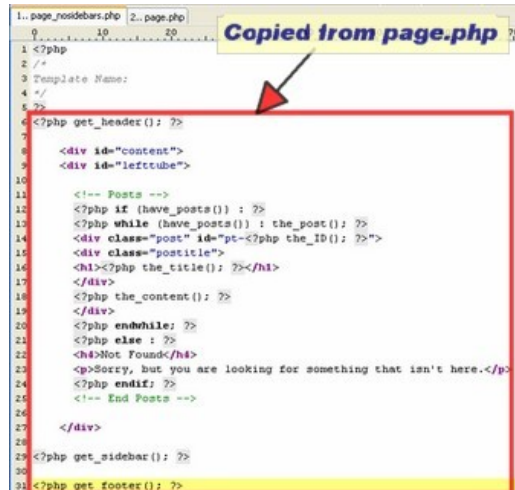
In this empty page_nosidebars.php file, paste the following on the very top of the file. Leave no line space on top. You may use line breaks here.

```
<?php
/*
Template Name:
*/
?>
```

Give the template a name. Example "No Sidebars". This is the text that will be displayed when choosing a template to apply. As you create more Page Templates, this can become confusing. So make it as brief as possible and yet descriptive so you know at once which template this is. Like this:

```
<?php
/*
Template Name: No Sidebars
*/
?>
```

Next, open page.php in PsPad, copy the file's entire contents into page_nosidebars.php immediately underneath the code above.



```
1. page_nosidebars.php 2. page.php
1 <?php
2 /*
3 Template Name:
4 */
5 ?>
6 <?php get_header(); ?>
7
8 <div id="content">
9 <div id="lefttube">
10
11 <!-- Posts -->
12 <?php if (have_posts()) : ?>
13 <?php while (have_posts()) : the_post(); ?>
14 <div class="post" id="pt-<?php the_ID(); ?>">
15 <div class="posttitle">
16 <h1><?php the_title(); ?></h1>
17 </div>
18 <?php the_content(); ?>
19 </div>
20 <?php endwhile; ?>
21 <?php else : ?>
22 <h1>Not Found</h1>
23 <p>Sorry, but you are looking for something that isn't here.</p>
24 <?php endif; ?>
25 <!-- End Posts -->
26
27 </div>
28
29 <?php get_sidebar(); ?>
30
31 <?php get_footer(); ?>
```

Go back to WordPress Admin, find the Page you have created in the first steps. In Wordpress 2.6 and under, go to Manage >> Pages. In WordPress 2.7 and above, go to Pages >> Edit. Click the title to edit the Page you have just created.

Scroll down the edit screen. Look for Page Template. It's usually toward the bottom.



Click on the drop down next to Default Template. You should see an option "No Sidebars" or whatever name you have given your Page template.



Select the new template, then save your Page once again to apply this template. Click Preview this Page at the top of the edit screen. You should not notice any difference between this and the default page. That's simply because we have not made any changes to the template. Keep the preview screen open. You will be refreshing and reviewing it often as you edit your new page template.

Return to PsPad. Open page_nosidebars.php if you have closed it.

Remember our objective is to remove the sidebars. Within page_nosidebars.php you will see the reference to:

```
<?php get_sidebar(); ?>
```

That, if you recall from our previous lessons is to tell WordPress to fetch and insert the sidebar. In this case, we will delete that since we do not want that to happen.

Now, refresh your Page preview. The sidebar should be gone, leaving a blank column in its space.



Next, you will work on moving or expanding the content column so it spans across the screen to fill the blank space. At this point, skill in HTML is a virtue. While I can show you exactly how to do it in our theme, you will have to rely on

your skills when working with other themes. Sometimes, you will only need to expand the column. At other times, you have to do a bit more tinkering to make it look the way you want.

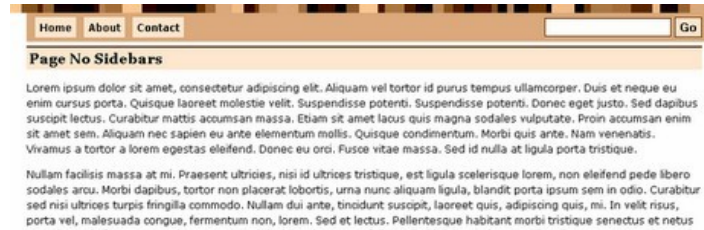
In our theme I'll show you two methods. The first one is easy. Remove the "lefttube" div. Let's test this out. Inside page_nosidebars.php, find the opening <div id="lefttube">. Delete it. Here's a screen shot of the original.

```
7
8 <div id="content">
9 <div id="lefttube">
10
11 <!-- Posts -->
12 <?php if (have_posts()) : ?>
13 <?php while (have_posts()) : the_pos
14 <div class="post" id="pt-<?php the_I
15 <div class="posttitle">
16 <h1><?php the_title(); ?></h1>
17 </div>
18 <?php the_content(); ?>
19 </div>
20 <?php endwhile; ?>
21 <?php else : ?>
22 <h4>Not Found</h4>
23 <p>Sorry, but you are looking for so
24 <?php endif; ?>
25 <!-- End Posts -->
26
27 </div>
```

And this is the result after.

```
8 <div id="content">
9
10 <!-- Posts -->
11 <?php if (have_posts()) : ?>
12 <?php while (have_posts()) : the_post(); ?>
13 <div class="post" id="pt-<?php the_ID(); ?>">
14 <div class="posttitle">
15 <h1><?php the_title(); ?></h1>
16 </div>
17 <?php the_content(); ?>
18 </div>
19 <?php endwhile; ?>
20 <?php else : ?>
21 <h4>Not Found</h4>
22 <p>Sorry, but you are looking for something that isn't here
23 <?php endif; ?>
24 <!-- End Posts -->
25
26 </div>
```

Save the file. Return to your browser to refresh your Page preview. You should see something like this.



If that is your desired effect, your work is done. But what if you want the content centered in a thinner column? Then you'd do this – again experience and skill with HTML and CSS is really helpful here.

Go back to page_nosidebars.php in PsPad, add a new div surrounding your content.

```
<div id="content">
  <div id="centercol">
    <!-- Posts -->
    <?php if (have_posts()) : ?>
    <?php while (have_posts()) : the_post(); ?>
    <div class="post" id="pt-<?php the_ID(); ?>">
    <div class="posttitle">
    <h1><?php the_title(); ?></h1>
    </div>
    <?php the_content(); ?>
    </div>
    <?php endwhile; ?>
    <?php else : ?>
    <h4>Not Found</h4>
    <p>Sorry, but you are looking for something that isn't here.
    <?php endif; ?>
    <!-- End Posts -->
  </div>
</div>
```

Still in PsPad, open style.css. We have just created a brand new div with a brand new ID we need to declare and format it in the style sheet. Scroll to the very bottom. Enter this.

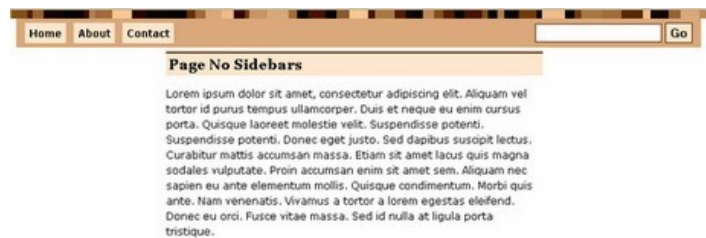
```
/* Misc Modifications */
#centercol {
```



```
width: 450px;
margin: 0 auto;
}
```

```
258
259 /* Misc Modifications */
260 #centercol {
261     width: 450px;
262     margin: 0 auto;
263 }
```

Go to your browser, refresh your Page preview. It should look like this.



Looks much better for a landing page already but... what if you want to get rid of the navigation on the top? The last thing you want to do is allow leads an excuse to distract themselves from your carefully crafted opt-in page.

Can you do that? Change the header of the Page without affecting the rest of the site?

Absolutely. Here's how.

Take a good look at `page_nosidebars.php`. Do you see the code that is used to call the header? It is

```
<?php get_header(); ?>
```

But wait! Before you do ahead and delete it. Remember, WordPress requires a header file to work. If you delete that, this Page is going to break. So what do we do? The answer, simply create another `header.php` file.

It is really that easy. So let us go ahead and make a duplicate of `header.php` You can open `header.php` in PsPad then click Save As and name this template something short and descriptive. Nobody sees this but you. For this exercise, I'll

name it header_nosidebars.php just to keep things together so I know which templates go together.

In this new header template, let's go ahead and delete the codes that call the navigation bar.

```
12 <?php wp_head(); ?>
13 </head>
14 <body>
15 <div id="container">
16 <div id="topnav">
17 <div id="search">
18 <form method="get" id="searchform" action="<?php bloginfo('url'); ?>">
19 <input type="text" value="<?php the_search_query(); ?>"
20 id="s" />
21 <input type="submit" name="submit" value="Go" id="searchsubmit" />
22 </form>
23 </div>
24 <ul>
25 <li><a href="<?php bloginfo('url'); ?>">Home</a></li>
26 <?php wp_list_pages('title_li='); ?>
27 </ul>
28 </div>
```

The result is this

```
11
12 <?php wp_head(); ?>
13 </head>
14 <body>
15 <div id="container">
16
```

Now, let's go to back page_nosidebars.php to switch out the default header to this one we have just created.

Delete <?php get_header(); ?> from page_nosidebars.php

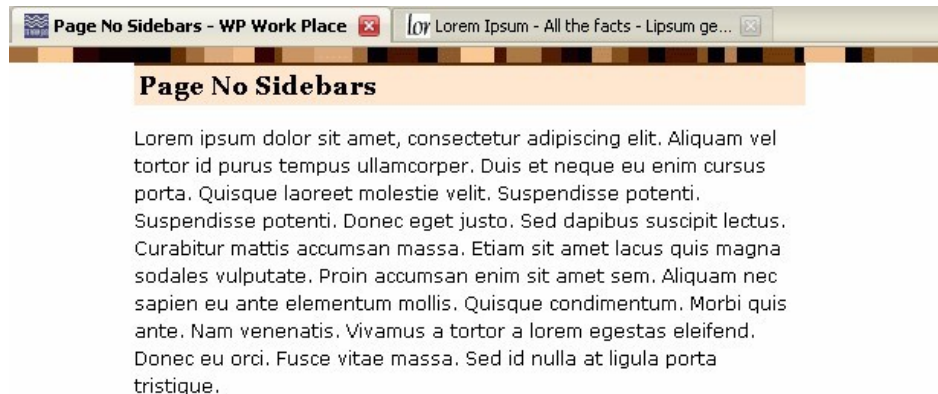
Replace it with this code.

```
<?php include 'header_nosidebars.php'; ?>
```

Does that code look familiar? It is PHP include. See how the skills you have built over the lessons beginning to serve you in different places?

Return to your browser, refresh your Page preview. Your navigation bar should be gone and you're left with a nice clean narrow single column landing page and footer.

If you visit the other areas of the blog, you'll see the blog and other Pages are unaffected by this change.



That is pretty neat isn't it? Almost like having two themes in one.

Closing

I urge you to practice. It really does make perfect in web development especially with WordPress. Even I continue to learn new things about it and that will be the case for as long as WordPress developers keep improving it and adding new features.

Try changing out the footer. Try using a different style sheet to use on this Page only. Hint, when you do that, you can completely change the theme for this Page so it looks like a different theme.

Here is the package for this theme up to this lesson. [Download](#) it to review and check your work when you get stuck.

Next Lesson...

I've had requests for a lesson about moving WordPress. While this is not theme related and outside the scope of Blog Theme Bootcamp, it is a nice break from template related work and important enough as I'm sure you will be requested to move sites from one host to another.

That is what we shall learn next.

I'd like to take a quick opportunity to inform you that I am releasing a new training center that is perfect for virtual assistants, freelance web developers and of course Blog Evangelists. This training center will cover among other technical matters, more about WordPress in general – not just themes. Stay tuned for more news about it.

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