Naming Conventions

How you name your files is important. Good file and folder names make developing your site easier (especially when you work with other people). They also help site visitors find your files. If you're working with other people, it's a good idea to discuss how you will name your files.

The following tips apply to all files used on the web—HTML files, image files, Flash movies, and so on.

Tip	Reason	Example
Give files unique, meaningful names.	Because you cannot put two files with the same name in one folder, all filenames need to be different. Use filenames that indicate the contents of the files.	*feedback_button.gif* instead of *button3.gif* *class-pet.jpg* instead of *roo-roo.jpg*
Use meaningful folder names.	Folders help you organize content. If their names are not meaningful, they will be less helpful.	*images* instead of *folder_2*
Use lowercase letters instead of uppercase (capital) letters.	Using a mix of uppercase and lowercase letters increases the possibility of broken links, because some web servers differentiate between upper and lowercase.	*class_home.htm* instead of *Class_Picture.htm*
Use file extensions (*.htm*, *.gif*, *.jpg*) consistently. Although you can use either *.htm* or *.html*, you should be consistent about using one or the other.	Using a mix of file extensions also increases the possibility of broken links.	*index.htm* and *directions.htm* instead of *index.html* and *directions.htm*
If you're working on a Macintosh, make sure you always include a file extension.	Although Windows requires file extensions, Macintosh does not. Web browsers need file extensions in order to display files.	*index.htm* instead of *index*
Use a hyphen (-) or an underscore (_) instead of a space.	Some web browsers do not recognize spaces.	*my-dog.gif* or *my_dog.gif* instead of *my dog.gif*
Use letters and numbers.	Many special symbols aren't recognized by web browsers.	*my2friends.gif* instead of *me&friends.gif*
Keep filenames as short as possible.	Not only does this help prevent broken links, but some web servers will cut off names at 25 characters.	*park_directions.htm* instead of *directions_to_the_fourth_street_park_plus_a_map.htm*