

# Planning and Creating an Effective Website for Your Classroom Activities

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# Website Design Workshop Objectives

**During this session, you will:**

- Learn the steps in creating a winning website**
- Analyze structure of MJHS Website**
- Discover how to develop an on-line presence**
- Analyze the purpose of your site**
- Understand important structural guidelines in website development**
- Develop techniques for attracting visitors to your site**
- Concentrate on the four design principles of website construction**
- Learn how to organize and control files as you develop**
- Understand the importance of naming files as you work**
- Learn how to avoid destroying the perfect website**
- Research school websites for ideas**
- Establish a plan for your website**
- Research other school websites to gain ideas**
- Create folders and files for teacher website**
- Work with formatting text, background, links, etc.**
- Linking files together**
- Publishing your website on the Internet**

**You've no doubt heard the saying that "getting there is half the fun." In design, the final product is the result of the trials, mistakes, and decisions encountered along the way. A design isn't simply made. It's a journey as well as a destination.**

**If you are going to be involved in Web page design, you need to come to grips early with the fact that you'll never design a perfect page, and you'll never really be done with the design process. You will run out of time, technology, content, or ability, and you will have to post the page, warts and all, for the world to see. However, the more time you spend up front in analyzing, planning, researching, sketching, and developing, the less chance you have of making a major mistake.**

## **About Page Design**

**Even though the Web is relatively young, there are already some definite do's and don'ts regarding content creation. If you heed some of the following regarding text, page length, graphics, and color, you'll be on your way to presenting an attractive and well-turned Web page, one with content that readers will enjoy.**

Time spent planning before you start “cooking” up your creation is time well spent. Consider these issues:

- **What’s the purpose of the page? Are you providing a service, product, or entertainment?**
- **Who is your intended audience? Knowing your readers helps you shape the information content and pick a consistent voice to address them.**
- **How do you intend to structure the information? It’s common to see at least two levels of hierarchy: a top level index and second-level pages. Put as much content toward the top of the hierarchy as possible. (This way, even the casual reader can quickly grasp the sort of information you’re presenting). The easiest way to lay out your information is by chunking it: break your topics into sub-topics. If you have several small topics, group them onto a single page.**
- **How many links will you include? Remember that readers can create links that go to your home page as well as to any page within your set of pages. Your links can be internal or external. Plan how you wish to structure the links and consider internal links keep the visitor focused on your page while external links take them away from your site.**
- **How many pictures, sounds, and movies should you use? The fancier and more complex your pages are, the more work and time you’ll need to develop them. While multimedia elements definitely add pizzazz to your pages, they also can make a page take too long to load, frustrating the reader and delaying the information they’re looking for.**

### **Web Page Design Do’s and Don’ts**

- **Don’t make your document overly dependent on features that can’t be seen by all browsers. If you decide to use special features, be sure to provide other options for the viewer.**
- **Do assume that a user’s screen size, number of available colors, and screen resolution will be different from yours, even those readers using the same browser. This means that a page that looks great on your screen might look completely different on someone else’s.**
- **Do create pages with the appropriate view size. Most current personal computer monitors display 640 x 480 pixels on 13 to 15-inch screens. Designing your pages so that the information is presented in short, clearly segmented chunks will make it easier to keep pages concise.**
- **Do keep closely related information within the confines of a single Web page, particularly when you expect the user to print or save the text.**
- **Do provide good content. While the graphic design of your pages should be pleasing, it is ultimately the content that determines a page’s value to others. Follow these simple guidelines to giving good content.**

- Use graphics and color and vary the font size to enhance your page, but make sure the page also works when viewed as straight text. And always include a text alternative to graphic elements.
- Pare down your text. Usability tests show that people will skip over text they consider nonessential. They don't like to scroll. Often readers will scan a page reading only the text of the hypertext links before they choose their next destination.
- Settle on as few heading styles and subtitles as are necessary to organize your content, then use your chosen styles consistently. Just because you have several options does not mean you should use them all in a single page.
- Avoid overusing underlining, italics, and multiple font styles in your text.

## Understanding HTML, .GIF and .JPEG

HTML stands for hypertext markup language. HTML is the building block of web page design. However, you don't need to know HTML to compose a web page. Popular programs such as Netscape Composer, Word, FrontPage, and others are editing tools which are based on a point and click response and HTML coding is developed in the background as you work with the editing program in a WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) format. However, it pays to be familiar with what's really going on inside an HTML document when you're troubleshooting a Web page you're working on. If you don't get the results you want, it's useful to look at the raw HTML file and tags to see what the problem might be. This is also a good way to study pages already posted on the internet to modify and develop your own style of design.

Formatting in HTML documents consists of tags of plain ASCII text instructions enclosed in angle brackets <>. A format area typically uses two tags: one at the beginning and another at the end. For example, to designate a particular line as a heading, you enclose the heading text inside tags that mark the beginning and end:

```
<H3>Hello World Wide Web!</H3>
```

The <H3> tag marks the beginning of text to be considered a level 3 heading; the </H3> tag marks the end of the text heading.

## .GIF and .JPEG

The two types of image formats used by most Web browsers are GIF (CompuServe Graphics Interchange Format, .GIF extension) and JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group, .JPG extension). The JPEG format works best for photos and continuous tone images. The GIF format works best for inline images, line art drawings, most logos, and screen dumps. Both formats should use a resolution of 72 dpi (dots per inch) and use RGB (red-green-blue) color mapping.

## Doing Graphics Justice

Graphics add to the visual appeal and information content of a page. But poor use of graphics can frustrate your readers or keep them from understanding the message you're trying to send.

- Practically every published Web author will agree--keep images small!! You should aim to keep the total file size of images used on a page to less than 30K.
- Use backgrounds intelligently. Backgrounds that are "loud" make it extremely hard to read the text that's on top of them. Don't let your backgrounds interfere with the message you're sending the reader. For a background to work well, color contrast is not enough. The background needs to be very light (for dark text) or very dark (for light text). A background that contains an image should have low contrast, so it's not too distracting.
- Use the Image properties dialog box to indicate the amount of space (in pixels) you want around an image. This speeds up the downloading process because the server doesn't need to request size dimensions to transmit to the client and can therefore display text faster.

## Finishing Touches

And last, but not least--the proverbial icing on the cake. These elements are considered the hallmarks of the work of a professional Web author:

- √ **Headers:** A consistent titling design at the top of your Web page allows your readers to immediately know what the main point of the document is, and what (if any) relationship the page might have to other pages in a related group. Unlike browsing a book, which is linear in design, a Web author can never be sure what other pages the reader has seen before linking to the current page. Graphics placed above the main heading should not be so large that they force the title of the page on a standard office-sized monitor (640X480 pixels) to go off the screen.
- √ **Important Information:** Ideally, each page should have who sponsors or develops the page, the mailing address, e-mail address, phone number, and/or some other contact information. You should provide a link to an e-mail form your readers can use to send comments and feedback to you.
- √ **Navigation:** This is a very important part of the design. Large Web pages need an index or table of contents link section. Also Web pages should include a target link (return link) to your top level on each page so readers have a quick way of returning to the beginning.
- √ **Updating Your Work:** It is vital to update your work so visitors realize the time elements of your information.

## About Word 2000 Web Authoring Capabilities

The document creation capabilities in Word 2000 are designed to provide beginning content creators with a simple yet powerful solution for creating and editing online documents. As you become more experienced and seek more challenges, you will very likely want to experiment with other programs such as Netscape Composer, FrontPage, and others or create your own HTML coding in a popular word processor to compose and edit your documents.

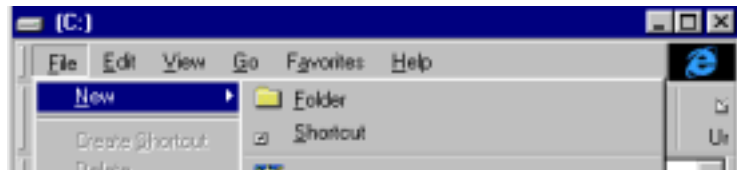
### Creating Your Web Page

**Figure 1:** Our first step in the creation process is to create any folders and/or files to begin our work. To do this follow these steps:

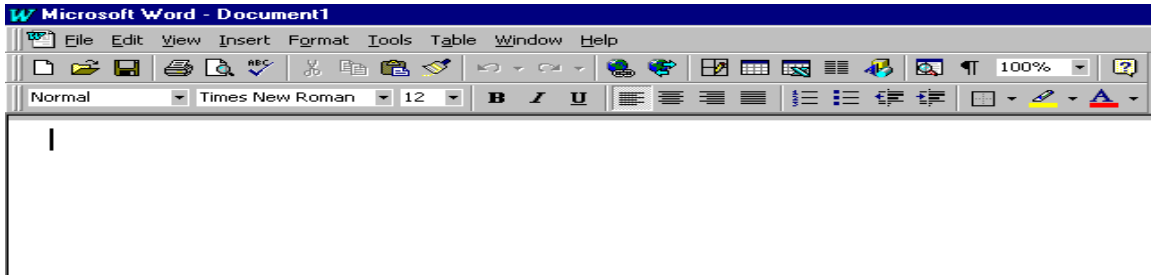
Double click on My computer on the desktop

Double Click on your network drive (I)

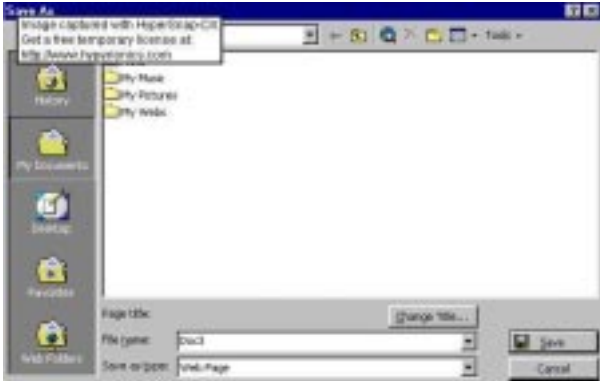
Choose File, then New, then Folder  
With New Folder highlighted, type your last name and first initial. This will be the location where you save all your work on the web page



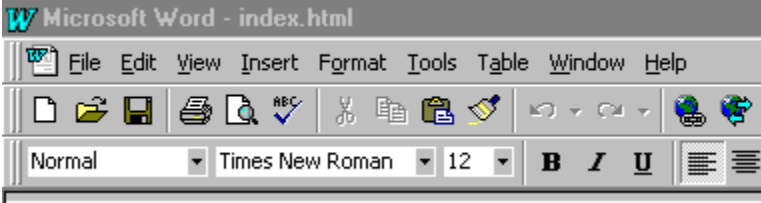
**Figure 2:** Then Open Word and Choose File and New. This will give you a choice of several items you can do with Word. We will choose to create a Web Page. This choice will begin a blank, unformatted web page ready to begin authoring. Using the Web Page Wizard will guide you through the process of pre-designed templates for quicker processing.



**Figure 3:** Click on File on the menu bar and choose Save As Web Page. This will allow you to give your document a name and save it to a specific location. We will save your work to the folder created earlier. We will name it as index. Most first pages of any Web site are called either index.html or default.html



**Figure 4:** This will change the document name in the title bar to index.html. The first page of a website should be named index.html or default.html dependent on the service provider’s specifications to which you will post the site. This also indicates it is the top level of the hierarchy and the first file in your web site. Now choose Format Background on the menu bar and choose a color for the background. Remember to consider the color of text you plan to use.



**Figure 5:** Now choose Format Background on the menu bar and choose a color for the background. Remember to consider the color of text you plan to use.



**Figure 6:** Now use the Formatting Toolbar to center the text, choose the font and font color and other design considerations.



You are now well on your way to creating your own style and design.

See the sample document provided on example of content to include for a classroom webpage: Welcome message, Room Number, Planning Period, E-Mail, Educational Background, Subjects Taught, Number of Years Taught, Most Enjoyable Part of Teaching, Other Teaching Activities, Hobbies, Family, etc.

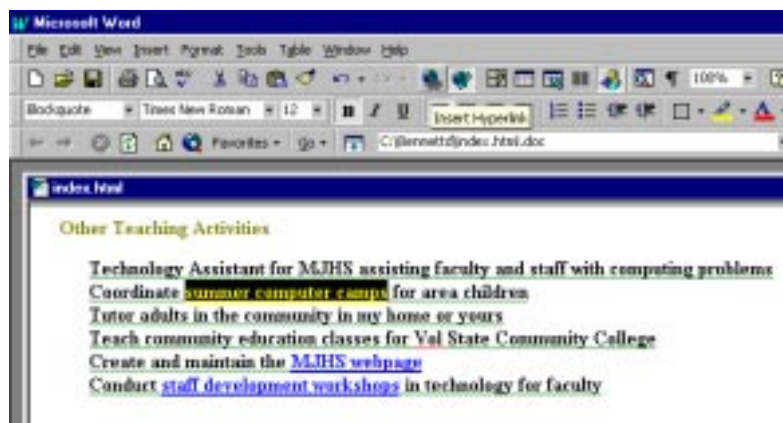
### Creating other Pages:

To create other pages to which to link the index.html file, repeat the steps indicated in Figures 1 through 6 naming them appropriately as to what the page will include (keep filenames simple and use lowercase letters with no spaces). Examples of names could be: classpolicies.html; syllabus.html; period1.html, etc. You should also save them again to the folder with your last name and first initial.

### To Link Pages together:

To link the pages together, type appropriate text to indicate you are providing a link. Highlight the text and choose the Hyperlink button on the toolbar

**Figure 7:** This will tell the computer you want to link this text with a file on your computer. A dialog box will appear allowing you to enter the internal filename or the complete external http:// address.







Your Web page can be updated as often as you like but you must also update the page on the server which hosts your page for the page to be viewed with those changes. Any graphic files used in a Web page must also be placed on the server which hosts your page and be correctly inserted with the proper path associated to find them.

File management is extremely important the larger your page gets and the more files and/or graphics it contains.

To put your Web page on the Web you must have an Internet Service Provider who also offers you Web space to host your site. In many cases, you have a certain amount of space for free. Check with your service provider for details.

To place a site on our school server, you should have all files in one folder. Guidelines include naming your files appropriately (short and lowercase), placing all image files in one folder, and submitting the folder to Diane Bennett for posting.

Students can be wonderful resources for creating Web pages which are course related. This can provide a great on-line resource for future students as well.

