INTRODUCTION TO DREAMWEAVER

Today, students will be using Macromedia Dreamweaver to make changes to their web pages in order to improve and refine them. Dreamweaver is a powerful web development tool, great for creating web pages, as well as managing the entire web site. Dreamweaver will allow students to create pages graphically as in Composer, but will give them much more control over the way they look. Accordingly, it also has a steeper learning curve.

You'll be focusing on the basics of web page creation in Dreamweaver today, giving students the knowledge to get started and explore the program. You should review this page and familiarize yourself with the program prior to the lesson. You can follow the instructions here, and also take the Dreamweaver tutorial, which will show you some more advanced features. You can access the tutorial by clicking on the *Help* menu and selecting *Using Dreamweaver*, and then clicking on *Dreamweaver Tutorial* in the help topics area.

Start off by introducing the program and talking about what they will be doing with it today. Tell students that Dreamweaver will give them much more control over their pages and will help to make their pages look more professional. Many major commercial web sites are created with Dreamweaver, so they are using a professional-quality tool.

Tell the students that you will give them a general introduction to the program, and then they will use their knowledge to complete their task for the day.

DREAMWEAVER WORK AREA

We'll start with the way the program is laid out. There are two main functions of Dreamweaver. The first is *web page creation*. The second is *web site management* (web site management is the arranging, uploading, and updating of your web site's files.) Thus, the work area of Dreamweaver is split into the same two categories:

#1 Site Management – *Site Files* window. The *Site Files* window is used to manage your web site (it says *Site* in the upper left hand corner of the window, and is split into two panes.) If the site window is not open, click *Window* in the Menu bar, then *Site Files*, or simply press the F8 key on your keyboard.

#2 HTML Creation/Editing – The *document* windows are used to create and edit HTML pages. A new document can be created by clicking on *File*, and *New window*. This opens a blank HTML page.

Creating a new site:

The first thing students need to do is create a folder that will hold all of their HTML files and images. (This is site management.) Depending on how your computer lab is set up, you may choose to have students save to a folder on the hard drive, a networked drive, or a floppy disk. (If students save their work to a folder on a hard drive that isn't accessible over the network, they will need to use the same computer whenever they are working on their web site, in order to access their files. Consult with your computer lab expert on the best place to save student work.) Complete the following steps to set up their new folders:

1. In Windows, create a new folder (wherever you have decided to save student work). Title the folder with your first and last name. Within this folder, create another folder, and call it *images* (all lower case). It is a good idea to have a separate folder for all your images for organizational purposes.
2. Open Dreamweaver (if you haven't yet).
3. Click on the *Site* menu, and select *New Site*… A dialog box named *Site Definition for Unnamed Site 1* pops up. In the *Site Name* area, type your first and last name, just as you did with the folder you just created in Windows.
4. To the right of where it says *Local Root Folder*, click on the icon of the folder. In the box that pops up, navigate to the folder you just created in Windows. Highlight the folder and click *Open*, then *Select*. Make sure that you don't select your *images* folder, but rather the one with your name. You can check to see if you selected the right folder by look at the path that appear in the box to the left of the folder icon.
5. Don't worry about any of the other options here, just click *OK*. A box pops up stating that the initial site cache will now be created. Click *OK* again.

6. You should now be looking at the Site window. The left side is blank, and the right side shows your new site folder, with the images folder inside it.

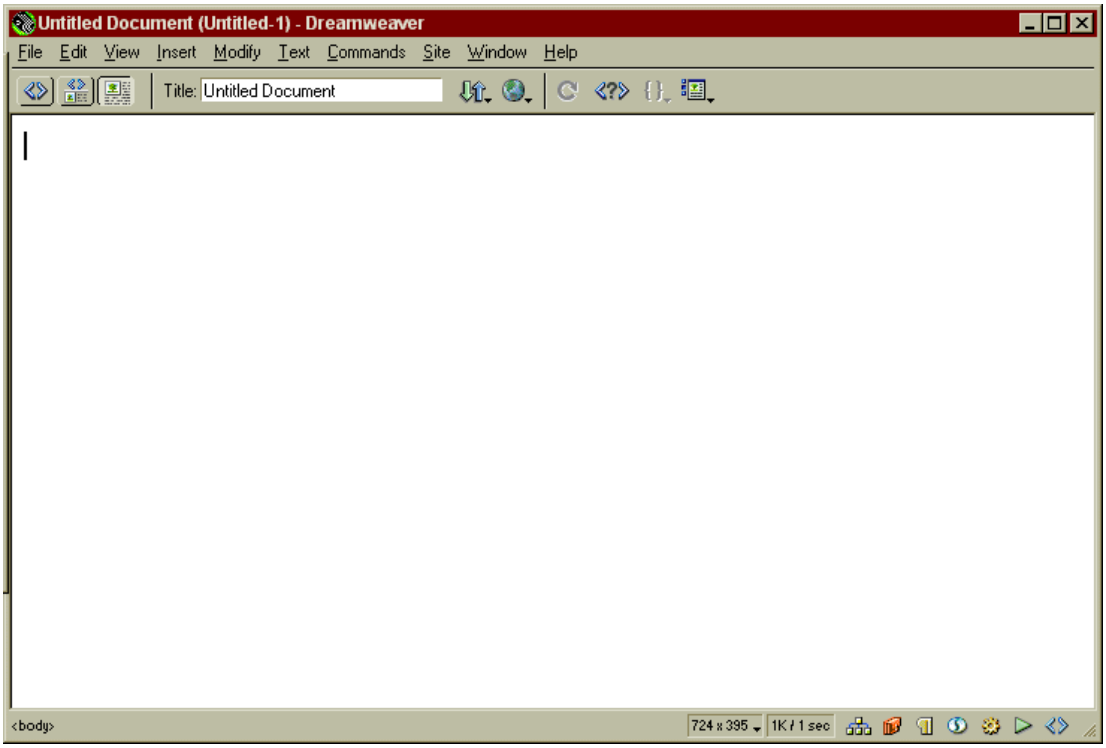
You've just created the folder that you will do all your web site work in. All HTML pages that you make MUST be saved in your site folder, and any images you want to use must be placed in the images folder, and then inserted into your web page. If you insert an image that isn't in your images folder, it won't appear on your page when you later upload your web site! Stress the importance of this to students. Keeping their site folders well organized will help **immensely** when the time comes to upload to the Internet.

With this basic site organization out of the way, it's time to talk about creating web pages in Dreamweaver. Go to the *File* menu and select *New File*. This will place a new file in your site folder, and will appear immediately on the right side of the *Site* window. (It's called untitled.html) Change it to read index.html.

NOTE: index.html is the name that should be given to the first page you want to appear on your web site. All web browsers automatically look for the index.html file to display first. No other pages should be called index.html. If your web site has several pages, index.html is the main page that all others link off of.

Once you've changed the name of the file to index.html, double-click it to open it up. You're now looking at the document window.

Document Window
The *Document window* shows the current file you are working on.
It looks like this:



If the *Document Window* that students open has tagged text (<html>, <head>), or has a split screen, tell them not to worry; they're about to learn how to change that.

Toolbar
The document window has a *toolbar* across the top.

Point out the first three buttons on the toolbar.

You can change your current view of the document by clicking on these buttons. Dreamweaver has *Design view*, which is similar to Composer, where you see a visual representation of your page, and *Code view*, which shows you the underlying HTML code. You can also use a combination of these two views that splits your page into half design view, half code view. This lets you click on certain parts of your web page and see the corresponding code, or vice versa. Have students click on the three buttons to see how it changes the view. (Now is a good time to remind students to use Tool Tips to determine what a button does—if they hold their cursor over a button without actually clicking it, the function of the button will pop up.)

Just to the right of the page view buttons, there is an area where you can type in the *title* of the page. What you type here is what will appear in the <TITLE> </TITLE> tag. Make sure students understand that this is the page title only, and not the name that the file is saved under.

Skip the next button (*File Management*), and continue to the *Preview/Debug in Browser* button. Click on this button, and you get a drop-down menu with several choices. Students will mostly use the *Preview in [browser name]* command, which will automatically open their page in the selected browser. Students should test their pages in both Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer, if possible. If both browsers are not listed here, select *Edit Browser List* and click the + button to add another browser.

These are the main buttons students will be using in this toolbar for now.

Objects Panel

To the left of the document window is the objects panel. If your objects panel is not open, point your cursor to *Window* (in your menu bar), and click. A list will appear. Click on *Objects*. A little check will appear next to the word, Objects, and the objects panel (seen below) should appear on your screen.

It has buttons for creating and inserting objects (like images or tables) into your document. Point out common buttons the students may use, like *Insert Image, Insert Table, or Insert Horizontal Rule*. Have them use Tool Tips to see what the other buttons do. Some of the buttons near the bottom are for inserting more advanced web design elements like Flash or Shockwave. If you have students who are familiar with these technologies, have them explore these buttons, as well.

Point out the word *Common*, with the arrow pointing down next to it. When you click on this, it gives you choices for other buttons that can be displayed. Click on the other choices to see the buttons that appear. Keep these buttons in mind because they are the easiest way to add content to your page.

We'll come back to the *Layout* and *View* buttons in just a minute.

Properties Panel

At the bottom of the screen you should see the *Properties panel*. It looks like this:

This is one of the most useful areas of Dreamweaver because it contains many of the options for changing the look of the page. Students will probably spend much of their time using the buttons on this panel.

In addition, this panel changes to reflect the options for the particular element you have selected. For example, if you are typing text, the panel looks like it does above. You can see that it gives you options to change the *Format* of the text (H1, H2, etc), what font to use, and the *size* of the font. Less obviously, it allows you to change the *color* of the text (click on the gray box to the right of the *Size* option. It will open a small window with different color swatches you can choose from.). It has buttons for *Bold, Italic, right justify, center justify, numbered list,* etc. These HTML concepts should all be familiar to students, so encourage them to type in some text and experiment with the different buttons to change the look of it.

Now, if you had an image on the page and clicked on it, the Properties panel would change to contain options for manipulating the image. Have students do this quickly—insert any image, click once on it, and look at the Properties panel to see the options available. Clicking on the down arrow on the bottom-right side (underneath the question mark and pencil) will expand the panel and give you even more options for the selected page element.

This is a quick explanation of the basic Dreamweaver work area. Students will find most of the options they need to change their page in the Objects and Properties panels. Remind them to use their Tool Tips to find the tool they need.

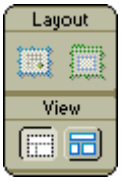
When creating a new page in Dreamweaver, you can change some basic aspects of the new page by clicking on the *Modify* menu above the toolbar, and selecting *Page Properties*. This opens a window containing many basic properties of the page that they should be familiar with. They can make the changes they want here, and they will affect the entire page. Most of these options can be changed elsewhere as well, but students should be aware of this menu and its options.

CREATING A PAGE WITH LAYOUT TABLES

Now, you will show students a great way to create a web page in Dreamweaver that gives them much more control over the look of the page: *Layout Tables.* (Note: It's best to be working in a new, blank document when creating a new layout table.)

The concept is to use tables not just for figures or charts within a web page, but to have the **entire page** be one giant table with lots of cells that hold your content—text, images, colors, etc. This way you can create many cells within a table and move your content around from cell to cell to change the look of the page. You could do this with Composer, but Dreamweaver gives you a quick and powerful way to do it with *Layout Tables*.

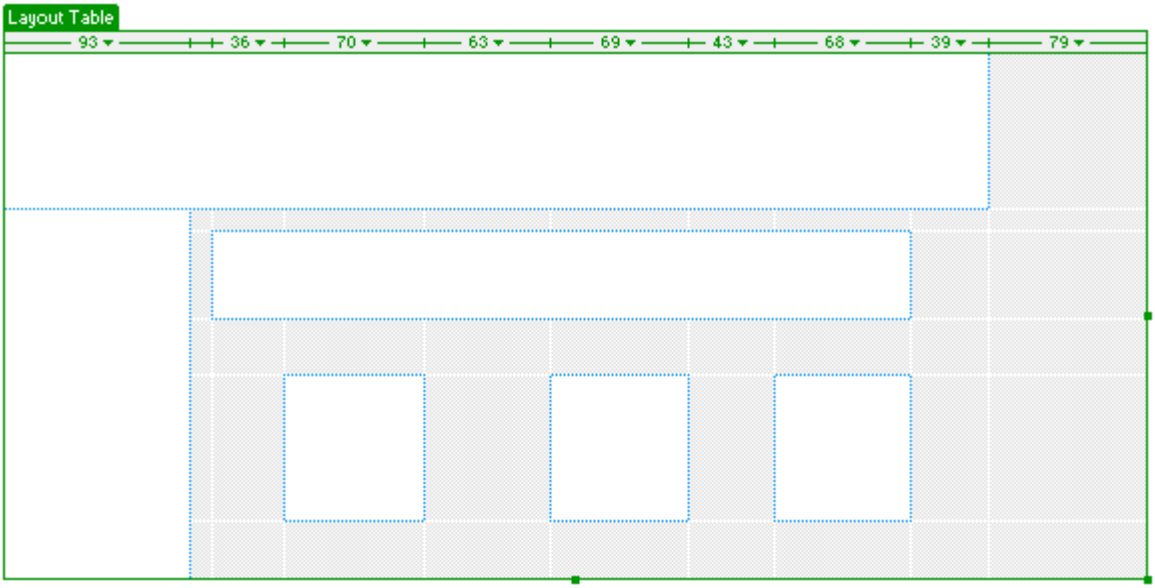
Have students look at *Layout* and *View* in the *Objects panel*:



This is where you can change between *Standard* view and *Layout* view. Layout view will allow you to easily create layout tables to hold content. Click the *Layout view* button. A window should pop up called *Getting Started in Layout View*. Have students read this and ask you if they have any questions. Make sure you have played with these buttons so that you can answer any questions the students might have. Click OK when done reading. You can now click the two buttons under Layout:

Click the button on the right, *Draw Layout Table.* This turns your cursor into crosshairs. Starting at the top left of the page, click and drag the cursor to create a rectangle that is about the same size as the current document window, then release. You now have a shaded area that is defined as a layout table. Now, click on the left button under *Layout*, which is *Draw Layout Cell.* You will now create cells that can contain your page's content, so click and drag to make some cells. (You need to click on the *Draw Layout Cell* button after creating each cell, or you can hold down the CTRL key while you drag to make several cells.)

Here's a sample Layout Table, containing several cells in the places where you might add content (text and images):



You can now click inside each cell and add text, an image, a background color, whatever! Notice that when you put the cursor on the border of a cell it turns red. Click on it when it's red and notice the *Properties panel*. It has changed to contain options for the cell. If you click on a grayed-out portion of the layout table, the *Properties panel* changes to contain options for the entire table, such as background color.

Encourage students to think about the content of their web page and create the layout—before adding any actual content (such as images or text). Just looking at the page in Layout form will give you an idea of the "look" of the page. Tell the students to consider the following design issues:

- Is the page balanced, or does it have too much content in a certain area?
- Where is the eye first drawn when looking at the page? Where do you want people to first look when they come to the page?
- Is there enough room for your content? Do you need to break up some of your information into multiple pages in order to keep a home page that is simple and engaging?

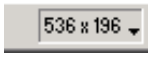
The layout tables feature makes it much easier to create a well-laid-out web page because it simplifies many of the steps that would normally be associated with creating a page this way. Encourage students to use this feature when changing and refining their pages. Remind them that it is easiest to create a new, blank page in Dreamweaver, and open their old page also. That way they can see what content they have and where they might like to place it on the page. It is not recommended to try to change an existing page into a layout tables page—just start from scratch! It won't take long to lay out the basic structure of the page, and will save you many headaches!

OTHER THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Page Size

An issue that students must keep in mind is the size of their page relative to the size and resolution of the computer monitor. Monitor resolution is a measurement of the amount of viewable area on screen (some common resolutions are 640x480, 800x600, and 1024x768; the bigger the numbers, the more room on screen). Since monitors generally range in size from 14 inches to 22 inches, and there are many different screen resolutions possible depending on the computer system, a web page creator must design his/her page to look good under any of these conditions. One way to do this is to ensure that your page will appear correctly under the "worst" (smallest) possible monitor conditions, say a 14-inch monitor with a 640x480 resolution. (NOTE: If the page is too big for the monitor and resolution, it usually does not get "cut off." Rather, the user will have to use the scroll bars on the browser window to see the full page. While it may not sound like a big deal, it is generally thought to be annoying and unprofessional.)

Along the bottom right hand corner of the Dreamweaver Document window is a *Window Size* selector:



Click on this to see different monitor resolutions (right side), and the corresponding actual usable screen area (left side). They should choose the smallest size possible. Students might be shocked at how small the smallest choice actually is. If they would like to try to design a page to fit that size, great! If not, they can choose a bigger size, but remind them that some users might not be able to see all of the page without scrolling. The idea is to reach the largest possible audience.

HTML Pages

A web page that is created in Composer does not have to be opened in composer. When it is saved, it is an HTML document, meaning that it can be opened in any program that opens HTML documents. This includes any web browser, Microsoft Word, Notepad, and most importantly, Dreamweaver. If students want to open their pages created in Composer with Dreamweaver, that's fine. This way, they can copy some of their content from page to page. BUT—students need to be making real *layout*, *organization*, and hopefully, *content* changes to their pages, so they shouldn't just be opening the old page and tweaking it slightly. Starting from scratch in Dreamweaver will give them better a better understanding of how the program works and ultimately, more control over the page.

If students do copy and paste from their old page to their new, they will notice that many things don't "come over." For example, copying text from a table that has a blue background color and pasting it into a new table will only bring over the text, any links within the text, and the text color, but not the background color of the table cell. If they want to keep the same colors, they should use the Dreamweaver Properties panel to adjust background colors of tables or table cells.

Adjusting Table and Image Sizes

If a student inserts an image into a table cell that is bigger than the table cell, the cell will stretch to accommodate the size of the image. If that is desired, great. If not, show students how they can resize images. Click on an image **once**. A small border will appear around it, accompanied by a few "handles"—little boxes on the sides and corners of the image. The best way to resize an image is to hold down the SHIFT key, then click and hold on the bottom right side handle, and drag the image to the desired size. Holding down the SHIFT key forces the image to stay proportional when being resized. Holding down the SHIFT key when resizing something should be like second nature after a while, because nine times out of ten, you don't want to distort the image's proportions.

(NOTE: It's best to only resize images by a little bit. If you want the image much smaller than the original, you should open the image in a program like Photoshop and change the actual image size to what you want it to be. The reason for this is *file size*. It doesn't make sense to force your user to load a giant image if you have reduced its size to that of a postage stamp! This will just take up time and frustrate the person viewing the page. The smaller the file size of the images, the better. Have students change the image size in Photoshop, and then make only minor adjustments in Dreamweaver.

To adjust the size of a table cell you have already created, move the cursor to the edge of the cell (a blue dotted line). When the cursor is on the line, it will turn into a solid, red line. Click on it now. This will produce handles around the cell that can be dragged to change the size. Again, holding down the SHIFT key will keep the cell's proportions, which may or may not be desired.

Adding Content

It is best not to copy and paste images from your old page to your new one. Instead, choose *Insert* > *Image* to add the image to your new page. After doing this, you may get a dialog box from Dreamweaver saying that the chosen image is outside of the root folder of the current site, and would you like to copy it? Choose *Yes*, and *OK*. This is part of the way Dreamweaver organizes the files that make up your web site. We will discuss this in detail and show how to set up a new site in a future lesson. For now, just get Dreamweaver to copy the image so that it will appear.