

## Understanding the Basics of Web Sites

**breadcrumb trail:** navigation field that allows users to track their path through a site

**browser:** computer program that allows users to view, navigate, and use Web site pages

**home page:** central page on a Web site, which introduces the site by providing menus, hyperlinks, and information about what a user will find on the site

**hyperlinks:** word, phrase, or image that is “active”; when clicked, a link takes users to related information within the same Web site or on a separate Web site

**menu options:** list of main sections of information on a Web site

**navigation:** features that facilitate movement from one Web page to another

**pop-ups:** graphic display area—typically a small window—that appears (“pops up”) in front of the Web page being viewed

**search field:** area where users enter key words to locate material on the Web site

**site map:** organized model of a Web site’s content

**URL:** stands for Uniform Record Locator and is the address of a Web page; each Web site and page has its own URL, which is also referred to as a domain name or Web address; domain suffixes give information about the type of Web site:

Domain suffix	What it tells you
.com	stands for commercial; originally intended for private, commercial purposes promoting a particular product or service; now used for a variety of purposes
.gov	stands for government; indicates the Web site is created and maintained by a branch of the United States Federal government
.org	stands for organization; originally intended for use by noncommercial and nonprofit Web sites; now used by a variety of organizations
.edu	stands for education; created and maintained by universities and educational institutions; students may post personal Web sites through a university’s site
.net	stands for network; was originally intended for sites related to the Internet itself but is now used for a variety of purposes, including commercial
~	signals personal site

**Web site:** collection of “pages” on the World Wide Web that are usually devoted to one specific subject; pages are linked together and accessed by clicking hyperlinks or menus

**World Wide Web:** collection of documents and applications residing on Internet servers around the world; Internet allows users to access the World Wide Web.

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Like print resources such as encyclopedias, books, and magazines, Web sites have unique features. Understanding the structure of a Web site will help you navigate the site efficiently and locate the information you need.

### HERE'S HOW

**Strategy 1: Identify the title and the source.** Are you accessing tonight's movie show times, doing research for a school paper, or looking for a job? How you explore a specific Web site largely depends on your purpose for visiting it. When looking at a site, the first thing you should notice is the title and the source. These elements will help you determine whether the site will have the information you're looking for.

- Look for **links** such as *About This Site*, *About Us*, or *Author* to learn more about the goals and purposes of the site.
- Look at the **URL** and **domain suffix** to help you determine who is publishing the site.

**Strategy 2: Preview the home page.** Like a magazine or a newspaper, a Web site has text features that are intended to help readers locate information quickly and efficiently. A Web site's home page should immediately tell you what the site has to offer.

- Look at the **menu options**, external and internal **hyperlinks**, icons, and interactive features. They will allow you to access the section that interests you the most or is the most relevant to your purpose.
- Use the **site map** to scan all of the site's offerings.

**Strategy 3: Understand the navigation.** As you begin to explore the Web site, be certain you know what navigation options are available. In addition to exploring the menu options and hyperlinks, you might do the following:

- Look for a **search field**, and enter key words to help you locate the information you need.
- Locate the **breadcrumb trail** to track where you've been and to return to a previous section or page.
- Look for **links** to the home page or to the different menu options on the site.
- Understand the difference between internal and external links. Some links will take you to different Web sites. You need to know when you've left one Web site and how to return to it.
- Look for the *forward* or *next* buttons, as well as a **site map**.

# Understanding the Basics of Web Sites

**Directions:** Web sites have different designs, but each site should have the basic tools to help you find information and navigate the site. Understanding the basic elements of a Web site will facilitate your use of the site. Use the Web page below to answer the questions.

http://www.epa.gov/highschool/

High School Environmental Center

United States Environmental Protection Agency

EPA Home > High School Home Contact EPA | Site Map | Search:  GO

**AIR**

- Acid Rain • Air Pollution •
- Climate Change •
- Global Warming •
- Ozone • UV Radiation •

**WASTE & RECYCLING**

- Hazardous Waste •
- Recycling •
- Solid Waste •
- Superfund •

**WATER**

- Drinking Water •
- Wastewater •
- Ground Water •
- Water Pollution •
- Oil Spills •

**YOUR PORTAL TO EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES**

This site will inform you about environmental issues and help you protect the environment.

**CONSERVATION**

- Endangered Species •
- Energy Conservation •
- Soil Conservation •
- Water Conservation •

**GET INVOLVED**

[Careers, Internships, & Scholarships](#)

[Community Service Projects](#)

[Awards & Competitions](#)

**EPA RESOURCES**

[About EPA](#)

[Environmental Dictionary](#)

[Environmental Laws](#)

[EPA Newsroom](#)

[EPA Publications](#)

[Information Sources](#)

**ECOSYSTEMS**

- Coral Reefs •
- Ecological Indicators •
- Forests • Habitats •
- Watersheds •
- Wetlands •

**YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD**

- Local Data •
- Maps •
- Community Issues •

**HEALTH & SAFETY**

- Asthma • Lead •
- Mercury •
- Pesticides •
- Radon •
- Sun Protection •

> Can't Find it Here? <

[Environmental Kids Club](#) | [Student Center](#) | [Teaching Center](#)

[EPA Home](#) | [Environmental Education](#) | [Linking Criteria](#) | [Privacy and Security Notice](#) | [Contact EPA](#) | [Text Version](#)

1. Examine the URL, paying particular attention to the domain suffix. What does the URL suggest about the site and its author? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Scan the title page, menu options, and links. Given these clues, what do you think is the purpose of the site? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. If you wanted to learn about the effects of global warming, which menu option would you choose? Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Understanding the Basics of Web Sites

**Directions:** One benefit of Web sites is that they allow for multiple paths of exploration. Two people may access a site, looking for the exact same information, but each one may access that information in completely different ways. Working with a partner, choose a Web site that interests both of you. Then, explore the Web site independently, tracking how you moved through the site. After you have both explored the site, reconvene to walk your partner through your path and compare how each of you used the site.

Web Site Home Page:	
Clicked on	What you read or did
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Compare your path with your partner's path.	