

ENGL 323: Writing for New Media

Building a Blog Reader Using Links, Tables, Images, and Frames

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Building a Blog Reader

The page you're going to build in this exercise is not likely something you'll use long-term, but it will show you how to do a lot of useful things in Dreamweaver. You'll work through the following tasks:

- Build a simple page with external links.
- Build a simple page using a table for layout.
- Manipulate and insert images into a page.
- Build a frameset to hold your pages in a single browser window.
- Experiment with javascript to make a link affect two different windows, which is pretty cool if you think about it.

Blog Reader Components

The reader you're building here consists of three web pages:

1. A navigation page that lists links to our class blogs.
2. A description page that provides a brief overview of each blog.
3. A frameset page that will display the navigation and description pages, along with the class blogs.

The Navigation Page

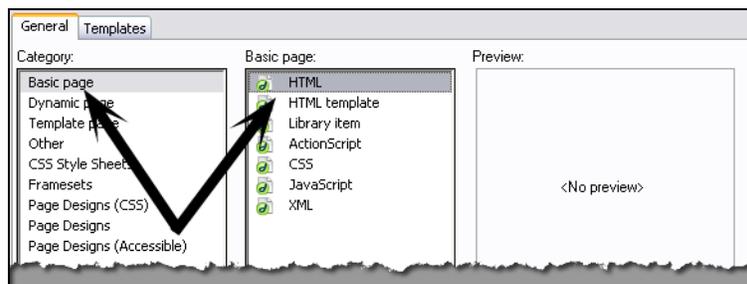
The navigation page includes a header and links to our class blogs. As such, it's pretty simple to build.

Create and Save the Navigation Page

1. In Dreamweaver, open a new file by doing one of the following:
 - If the splash screen is visible, go to **Create New > HTML**.

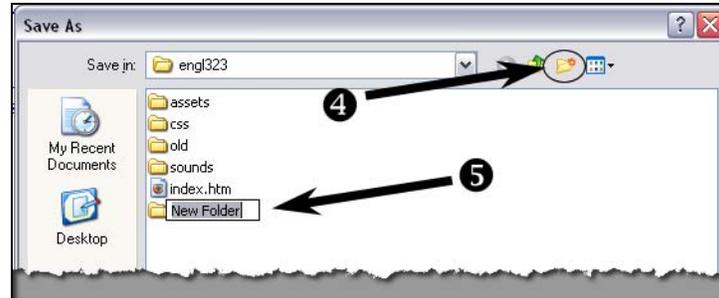


- Go to **File > New** [or **Ctrl + N**]; in the dialog box that opens, select **Basic page** and **HTML**. Click the **Create** button.



2. Save the file: go to **File > Save As...** [or **Ctrl + S**].
3. Navigate to your H: drive "ENGL323" folder.

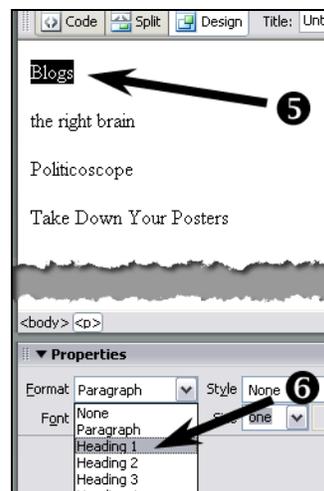
4. Create a new folder by clicking on the **New Folder** icon.



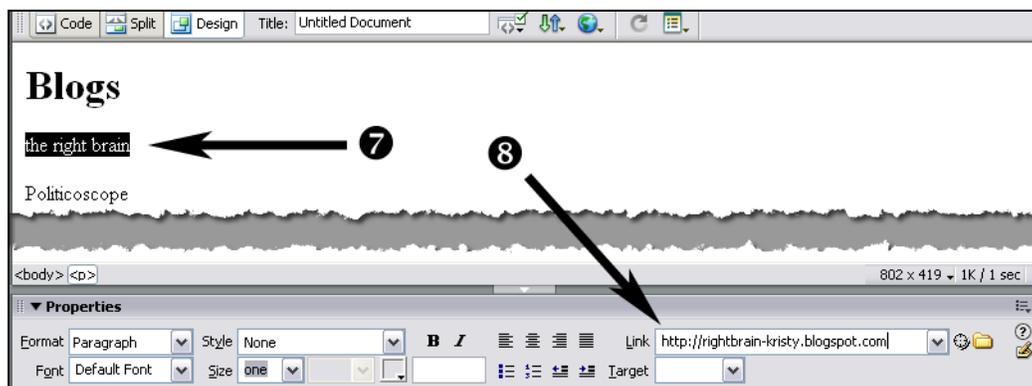
5. The new folder will appear with the name “New Folder” selected and ready to be changed. Name it “blogreader” then double-click the folder to open it.
6. Name your file “blogmenu.htm” and click the **Save** button.

Create Links in Your Navigation Page

1. In the Design window, type Blogs and hit **Enter**.
2. Type the right brain and hit **Enter**.
3. Type Politicoscope and hit **Enter**.
4. Type Take Down Your Posters and hit **Enter**.
5. Select the word Blogs.



6. In the Properties panel, choose **Heading 1** from the **Format** drop-down menu.
7. Select the right brain.



8. In the Properties panel, type `http://rightbrain-kristy.blogspot.com` in the **Link** field and hit **Enter**.

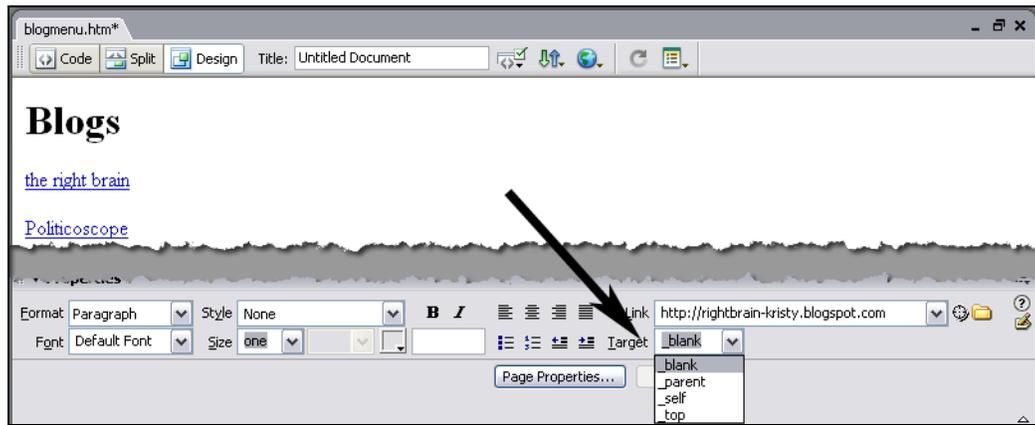
9. Create links for the other two blogs:
 - Politicoscope: <http://politicoscope.blogspot.com>
 - Take Down Your Posters: <http://takedownyourposters.blogspot.com>
10. Save the file.

You have a web page now that links to three of our class blogs. Links are basically easy to create, although there are additional things we can do to them.

Open Links in a New Window

Your links will open inside the current window, replacing your page with the linked page. You can make the pages open in a new window (or a new tab in a browser that supports tabs):

1. Put your cursor anywhere in the text for one of your links. You should see the URL in the **Link** field of the Properties panel.
2. Underneath the **Link** field is a **Target** drop-down menu. Choose `_blank` from this menu.



3. Do this for each link.
4. Save the file.

The other options in the Target drop-down menu relate to frames. You probably won't use them much, but FYI:

- `_parent` replaces a frameset inside a frameset, and opens the new page where the inside frameset had been.
- `_self` opens the new page inside the frame the link is in.
- `_top` replaces all of the frames with the linked page.

The Description Page

This page will provide a brief overview of the blogs you're linking to. The description will appear in one frame, with the blog appearing in another. Putting this page together will introduce you to working with tables and images in Dreamweaver.

Create and Save the Description Page

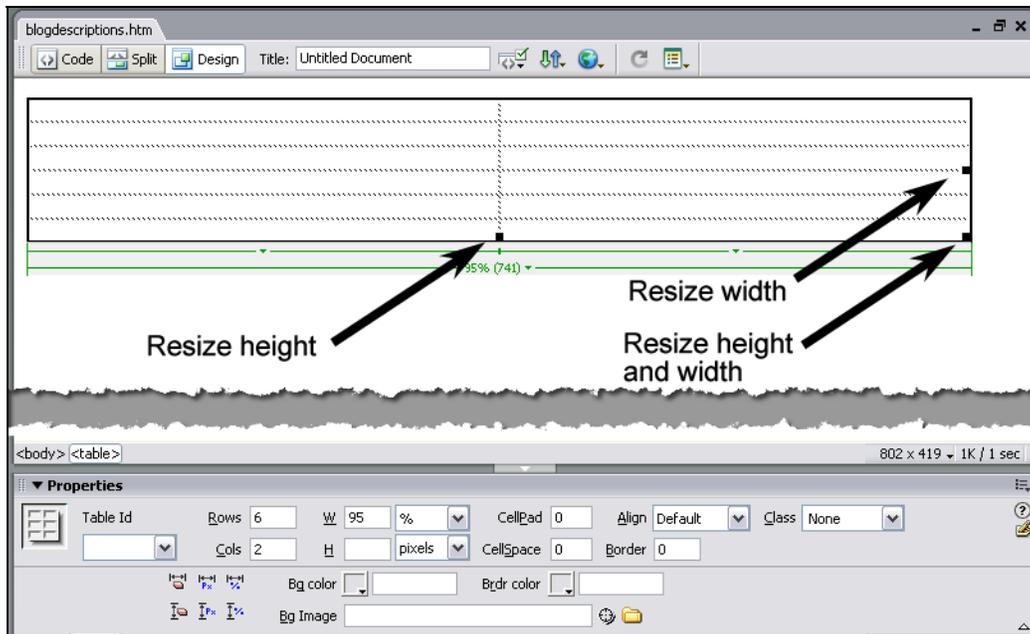
Open a new file in Dreamweaver and save it: name the file `blogdescriptions.htm` and save it to your "ENGL323/blogreader" folder.

Build the Initial Table

You can always change the design of your tables after you create them, but it pays to do some planning and figure out how many rows and columns you'll need. We'll need six rows and two columns.

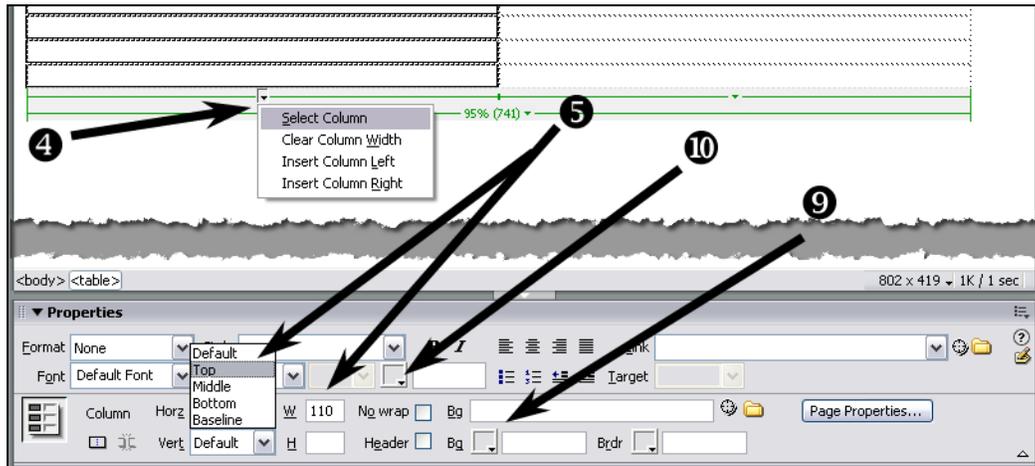
1. Go to **Insert > Table** [or **Ctrl + Alt + T**].
2. Set the following parameters:
 - **Rows:** 6
 - **Columns:** 2

- **Table width:** 95 percent
You can set a table's width as a percentage or as a number of pixels. Using a percentage means the table will resize itself according to the width of the browser window—in this case, no matter how wide the browser window, the table will be 95% as wide as the window. If you set pixels, the table will stay the same width no matter the size of the window.
 - **Border thickness:** 0 pixels
Setting the border to 0 makes it invisible. Most of the time when you use a table for layout you'll hide the borders.
 - **Cellpadding:** 5 pixels
This sets the amount of space between a cell's border and its contents.
 - **Cellspacing:** 0 pixels
This sets the amount of space between cells.
3. Click **Ok**. You should see something like the image below. When the table is selected, you can drag the resizing handles (the small black boxes) to change the height (bottom box), width (right box), or height and width (corner box).



You'll also notice the Properties panel at the bottom, where you can re-define the table properties you set when you first inserted the table.

- Click on the small green arrow under the left column (you can also select a column by moving the cursor over the top border of the table—watch for the down arrow to appear). A context menu will appear; select **Select Column**.

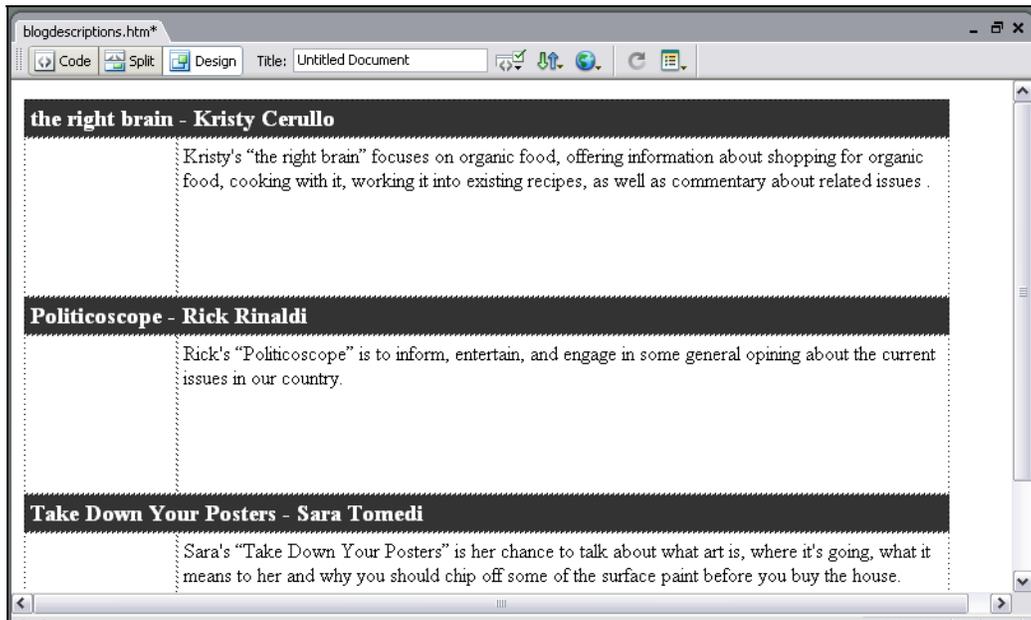


- Notice that the Properties panel has changed. Set the width of the column to 110 pixels, and the vertical alignment (**Vert**) to **Top**.
- Select the left column and set its vertical alignment to **Top**.
- Select the top row: click in one cell and drag across the other cell to select both, or move the cursor over the table's left border until an arrow appears and then click.
- Go to **Modify > Table > Merge Cells** [or **Ctrl + Alt + M**] to combine the cells into one.
- In the Properties panel, set the background color to a dark grey or black by clicking on the small black arrow in the **Bg** box (refer to the image above). A palette of color swatches will open for you to choose from.
- In the Properties panel, set the text color for the row to white. Refer to the image above.
- Merge the cells in rows three and five and set their background color and text color. Your table should look like this:

Inserting the Descriptions

- In the top row, type the right brain – Kristy Cerullo.
- Select the text and choose **Heading 3** from the **Format** drop-down menu in the Properties panel.
- In the third row, type Politicoscope – Rick Rinaldi; select and format as **Heading 3**.
- In the fifth row, type Take Down Your Posters – Sara Tomedi; select and format as **Heading 3**.
- In Row 2, Column 2, type Kristy's "the right brain" focuses on organic food, offering information about shopping for organic food, cooking with it, working it into existing recipes, as well as commentary about related issues.
- While the cursor's still in this cell, set the cell's height at 125 in the Properties panel.

7. In Row 4, Column 2, type Rick's "Politicoscope" is to inform, entertain, and engage in some general opining about the current issues in our country.
8. While the cursor's still in this cell, set the cell's height at 125 in the Properties panel.
9. In Row 6, Column 2, type Sara's "Take Down Your Posters" is her chance to talk about what art is, where it's going, what it means to her and why you should chip off some of the surface paint before you buy the house.
10. While the cursor's still in this cell, set the cell's height at 125 in the Properties panel.
11. Save the file. Your table should look something like this:



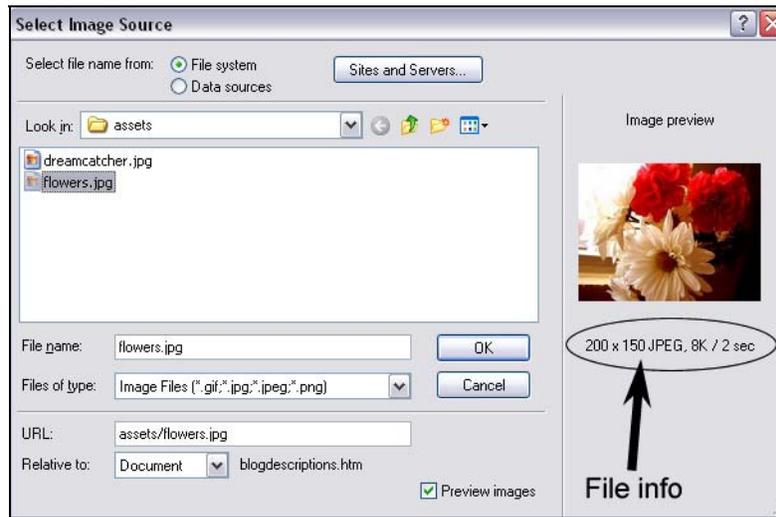
Working With Images

Dreamweaver is not a graphics program. You can use it to see how images will look on a web page, but that's about it. If you want to create or alter an image, you will need to work with it in a program like Fireworks, Photoshop, Paint, Illustrator, and so on.

Inserting Images in a Web Page

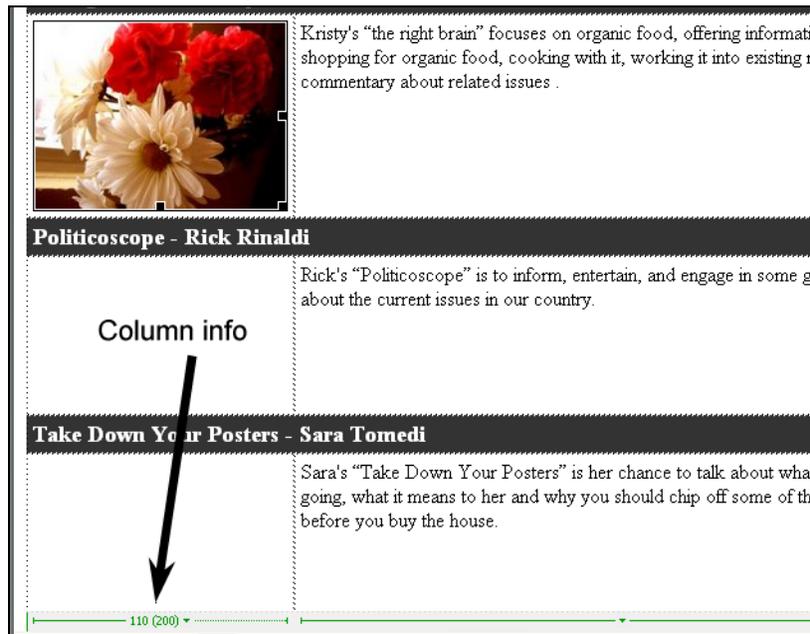
1. Open your "blogdescriptions.htm" file in Dreamweaver.
2. Open a browser, and go to Kristy's blog: <http://rightbrain-kristy.blogspot.com>
3. Right-click on the picture of flowers; choose **Save Picture As...** and navigate to the "blogreader" folder on your H: drive.
4. Create a new folder, name it `assets` and save the picture in this folder.
5. In your browser, go to Sara's blog: <http://takedownyourposters.blogspot.com>
6. Save the very large picture (**Save Background As...**) to your "blogreader/assets" folder.
7. In Dreamweaver, put the cursor in Row 2, Column 1.

8. Go to **Insert > Image**; navigate to your “blogger/assets” folder and choose “flowers.jpg”—notice that the dialog box tells you the dimensions and file size of the image; this image is 200 pixels wide, and the table cell you’re putting it in is set at 110 pixels wide. Something’s got to give.



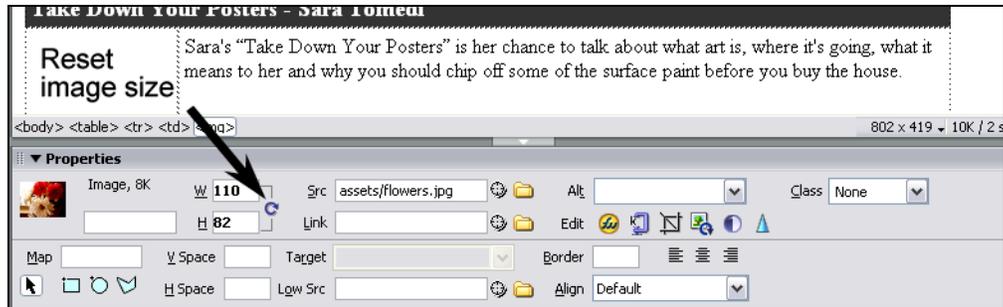
9. Click **Ok**.

Notice now that the cell has expanded to accommodate the image. If you look at the bottom of the table, you’ll see that the structure information reads **110 (200)** for this column. That means the column is set to be 110 pixels wide, but is forced to actually be 200 pixels wide.



10. Resize the image by grabbing the resizing handle in the lower-right corner of the image. Hold the **Shift** key to keep the height/width ratio the same and drag the handle, making the image smaller. Watch the Properties panel—the image size will update as you drag. Get it down to 110 pixels wide.

- If you make a mistake, or lose the original picture's proportions, click the Reset icon to start over.



- Insert and resize “dreamcatcher.jpg” in Row 6, Column 1.
- Save the file.

Notes about Resizing Images

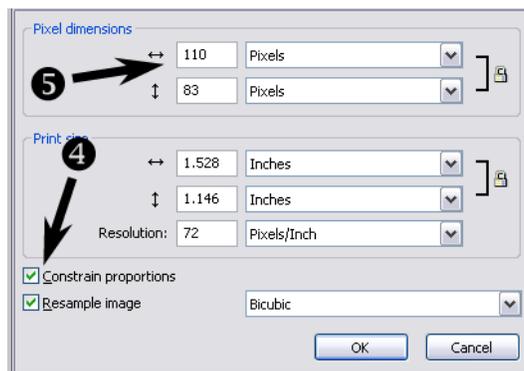
Resizing an image in Dreamweaver does not change the original image; the “dreamcatcher” picture file is still 64K, and the dimensions are still 600x597. If you put this web page and that image on the web server, browsers will load your page, download the full-sized image, and re-size it for presentation. Do not make browsers resize an image. Loading an image that’s bigger than it needs to be is slow, and browsers are unreliable at resizing images.

Use Dreamweaver to play with image sizes, but once you find the size you want, edit the original in a graphics program, scale it to the size you want, and save it.

Avoid scaling an image larger than its original dimensions. This will make for a fuzzy, boxy, “pixelated” image. Graphics programs have to insert new pixels to fill the larger size, and they do this by duplicating existing pixels. This creates boxy images. Making an image smaller than its original size doesn’t have as obvious an effect on appearance.

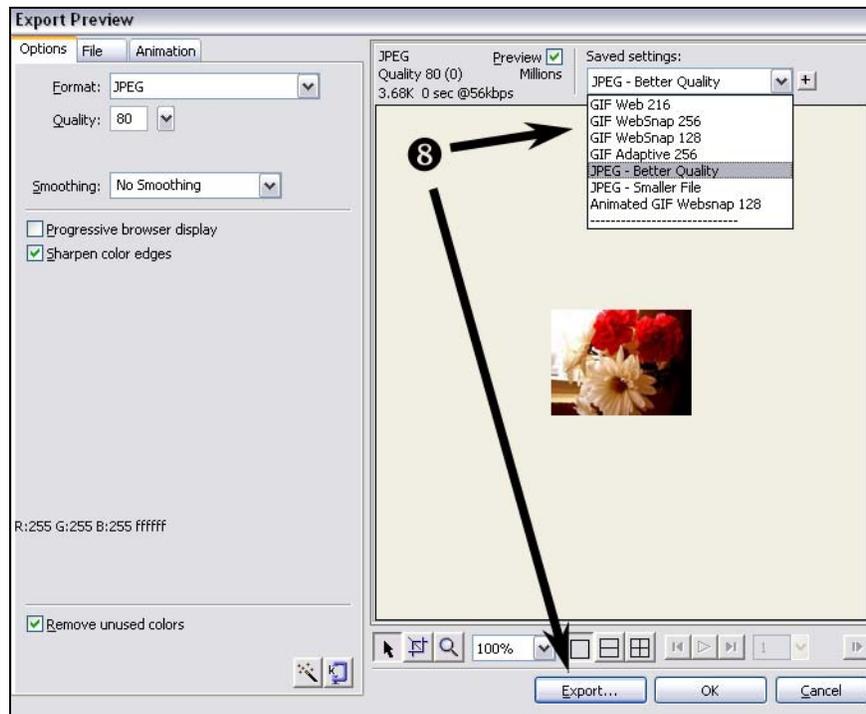
Using Fireworks to Resize an Image

- Open Fireworks.
- Go to **File > Open** and navigate to your “blogreader/assets” folder; select “flowers.jpg” and click **Open**.
- Go to **Modify > Canvas > Image Size...**
- Make sure the **Constrain Proportions** and **Resample Image** boxes are checked.



- Change the pixel width to 110; the height should change automatically to 83.
- Click **Ok**.
- Go to **File > Export Preview...**

8. Select **JPEG – Better Quality** from the **Saved Settings** drop-down menu; click **Export**.



9. Navigate to your “blogreader/assets” folder. You might consider giving the file a new name, or saving it in a new folder, or moving your original images to another folder—if you save this edited version over the original, you lose the original. Click **Save**.
10. Do the same with “dreamcatcher.jpg”.

Re-Insert the Images In Dreamweaver

1. In Dreamweaver’s Design view, select the image you’re replacing and delete it.
2. With the cursor still in the table cell, follow the steps to insert an image, this time choosing the resized version.
3. Save the file.