```
$ less ch03
A file is the unit of storage in Unix, as in most other systems.
A file can hold anything: text (a report you're writing,
        .
        .
        .
:
```

The basic **less** prompt is just a colon (`:`)—although, for the first screenful, **less** displays the file's name as a prompt. The cursor sits to the right of this prompt as a signal for you to enter a **less** command to tell **less** what to do.

Like almost everything about **less**, the prompt can be customized. For example, using the **less –M** option on the **less** command line makes the prompt show the filename and your position in the file. (If you want this to happen every time you use **less**, you can set the LESS environment variable to M (without a dash) in your shell setup file. See the section "Customizing Your Account," later in this chapter.)

You can set or unset most options temporarily from the **less** prompt. For instance, if you have the short **less** prompt (a colon), you can enter **–M** while **less** is running. **less** responds "Long prompt (press RETURN)," and for the rest of the session, **less** prompts with the filename, line number, and percentage of the file viewed.

To display the **less** commands and options available on your system, press "h" (for "help") while **less** is running. Table 3-1 lists some simple (but still quite useful) commands.

Table 3-1. Useful less commands

Command	Description		Command	Description
SPACE	Display next page.		v	v
RETURN	Display next line.		CTRL-L	Redisplay current page.
*n*f	Move forward *n* lines.			Help.
	Move backward one page.		:n	Go to next file on command line.
*n*b	Move backward *n* lines.		:p	Go back to previous file on command line.
/*word*	Search forward for *word*.		q	Quit **less**.
?*word*	Search backward for *word*.			