## Best practices for file naming conventions

Review the following file naming recommendations:

* Work out and agree on file naming conventions early on in a project to avoid renaming files again and again.
* Align your file naming with your team's or company's existing file-naming conventions.
* Ensure that your file names are meaningful; consider including information like project name and anything else that will help you quickly identify (and use) the file for the right purpose.
* Include the date and version number in file names; common formats are YYYYMMDD for dates and v## for versions (or revisions).
* Create a text file as a sample file with content that describes (breaks down) the file naming convention and a file name that applies it.
* Avoid spaces and special characters in file names. Instead, use dashes, underscores, or capital letters. Spaces and special characters can cause errors in some applications.

## Best practices for keeping files organized

Remember these tips for staying organized as you work with files:

* Create folders and subfolders in a logical hierarchy so related files are stored together.
* Separate ongoing from completed work so your current project files are easier to find. Archive older files in a separate folder, or in an external storage location.
* If your files aren't automatically backed up, manually back them up often to avoid losing important work.

**Learning Log: Review file structure and naming conventions**

| **Date:** 16-01-2023 | **Course/topic:** Course 3: Prepare Data for Exploration | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Learning Log:** Review file structure and naming conventions | | |
| **Review best practices** | When creating a file structure and naming convention pattern for a project, you should always:   * Work out your conventions early in your project. The earlier you start, the more organized you’ll be. * Align file naming conventions with your team. Conventions are most useful when everyone follows them. * Make sure filenames are meaningful. Stick to a consistent pattern that contains the most useful information needed. * Keep file names short and to the point.   Remember, there are some stylistic choices you’ll need to make when it comes to filename conventions. However, there are still best practices you should follow here, too:   | **Formatting Convention** | **Example** | | --- | --- | | Format Dates as ‘yyyymmdd’ | SalesReport20201125 | | Lead revision numbers with 0 | SalesReport20201125v02 | | Use hyphens, underscores, or capitalized letters | SalesReport\_2020\_11\_25\_v02 | | | |
| **Reflection:** | Write 2-3 sentences (40-60 words) responding to each of the questions about file structuring and naming conventions below: | | |
| **Questions and responses:** | * Why are file structure and naming conventions so important? What are the consequences of poor organization for data analysts at work?   *File structure and naming conventions are important to ensure data is easily accessible and understandable. Poor organization can lead to confusion, wasted time and errors in data analysis and reporting.*   * How would you structure folders and files? What naming conventions would you use?   *I would structure folders by project or topic and organize files within those folders by date, version or type, and use clear and consistent naming conventions that include relevant information such as the date, project name, and file type.*   * What appeals to you about these choices?   *Doing this would lead to clarity about what to except from the file and less confusion when we look back at a file.* | | |