**Phage Naming Rules and Guidelines**

Naming your phage is one of the most exciting parts of the SEA-PHAGES discovery process, but it is also an important responsibility. You are selecting a name that will enter the scientific record and may appear in papers, public databases, and/or news articles. For that reason, it’s important to choose a name that can be used in those contexts. Playful is fine, unprofessional is not.

Below are some of the hard-and-fast rules of phage naming, so please pay careful attention to them. But there may also be times when a proposed name technically satisfies all the rules below yet still may not be a good choice. Because of this, we review all phage names when you submit them, and may need to “veto” a particular name and ask you to modify or change it. The more you stick to the rules and guidelines below, the less likely it is your name will need to be modified before entering the scientific record.

1. **Do not name your phage after Nicolas Cage.**
2. **Must be a new name.**  Duplicate names will be rejected.
3. **No homophones of existing names.** Avoid names that are very similar to—or homophones of—existing names. For example, there is already a phage “Dori,” so do not name your phage “Dory” or “Dooori” or “Doriii”. Please avoid “cheating” this requirement by using 3 for E or 5 for S, or by doubling consonants, etc.
4. **Must be 4 characters or longer**. Gone are the days of L5, U2, and D29.
5. **Must start with a capital letter, not a lowercase letter or number.**
6. **Must not exceed 14 characters in length.**
7. **Numbers and letters only.** Special characters or symbols ()#-@\_%$&^\*>?:”\_ etc. are not acceptable.
8. **Don’t include spaces in the name.** CamelCaps are an acceptable and useful way to create a readable multi-word name, like “BestEver” rather than “Bestever”.
9. **Avoid names with all capital letters and/or no pronounceable parts**. For example, names like RTTJ or GOANNA or ALx65Tb are not good options. Think of something you might name a pet, not a robot.
10. **Avoid words that already have specific meanings in biology, such as phage, pham, cluster, virus, capsid, or myco** (or their derivatives and homophones). Do not try to get around this rule by using words such as “fage” or “MileyVyrus.”
11. **Similarly, avoid making your phage sound like a disease.** Stay away from “Georgeitis”, “Veronicalgia”, and “Marcilepsy”.
12. **Phage names are case-sensitive, so be consistent with CAPS/lowercase letters**. If the phage is RedRock in one place, it should not be redrock or Redrock in another place.
13. **Do not use a single person’s first and last names**. Example: “GrahamHatfull” is not an acceptable name. However, you could name your phage “Graham” or “Hatfull” or “Gratfull”.
14. **Phage names cannot begin with “The” or its equivalents in other languages.** Instead of “TheHammer”, use “Hammer”.
15. **If you are a student, run your name by your professor before submitting it.**

**Strong suggestions and guidelines to help choose a good name:**

* Think of choosing a phage’s name as **similar to choosing a child’s or pet’s name**. “Humphrey” or "Giles" are names you could call a dog. "YRTT”, “La7X”, “Fpiml”, and “TDAY09RD” (all real name submissions) are not great choices for children/pets, and are not ideal for phages either.
* Avoid names that appear systematic. Naming phages “BubblesA”, “BubblesB”, and “BubblesC” because you found them all implies a relationship between the phages themselves which can cause confusion.
* Phage names should be **easily pronounceable**. The phage “Gf33Rf22” may technically fulfill the above rules, but it is difficult to say out loud and would likely be vetoed. This also applies to initial-type names. Avoid things like “Rnt15” and instead make sure to **have a word-like, pronounceable part**, such as “Runt15”.
* **Avoid all CAPS**. In addition to making your phage name seem angry or like it forgot to turn off Caps Lock, these names often appear similar to old systematic names which we are trying to avoid. So “BALL16” and “JNK1” are not good choices. Try “Ball16” or “Jenks” instead.
* Stay away from political, controversial, or violent names. In some cases, GenBank will reject these. For example, “Romney2012” was rejected, but “Romney” was okay.
* Avoid things that are squeezing sentences into phage names. “IEatBeans” is not great, “BeanEater” would be better.