# Wikipedia Education Program

# Using Talk Pages

Talk pages are used by Wikipedians to communicate with other editors. You'll be interacting with other editors on talk pages. Here are some tips for success.

**Talk (or "discussion") pages are a critically important communication channel for Wikipedia Education Program participants.** Wikipedia editors use talk pages to discuss information about the articles and to communicate with other editors. To see a talk page, just click on the "Talk" tab on any article or user page. To see your talk page, click on "My talk" on the upper right corner once you're logged in.

Editors may leave you suggestions for your article, offer help on learning a Wikipedia policy, or just let you know they like your work. If you have a question about Wikipedia, leave a message on your course's talk page or your Ambassador's talk page. Here's how!

## Starting a new thread

When you want to communicate with someone about a topic that's not already covered on the article or user talk page, start a new topic.

- Start a new section at the bottom of the talk page. Click on the **"New section"** link that's between the "Edit" and "View history" tabs at the top of the talk page screen. Be sure to enter a section header in the "Subject/headline" line.

- **Sign your post!** When you post a message on a talk page, it's important to let other editors know who wrote it. At the end of your post, type four tildes (~~~~), which will automatically add your user name and the date.

- Click **"Save page".**

## Replying to an existing thread

Has someone left you a message you want to reply to? It's easy!

- Click the **"Edit"** link on on the right end of the bar of the section you want to reply to.

- **Use a colon (:) to indent your message** to create an threaded message. See http://enwp.org/WP:TPHELP for more information on indenting talk pages with colons.

- **Sign your post!** Type four tildes (~~~~), which will automatically add your user name and the date.

- Click **"Save page".**

## Get e-mailed when you get a message

Wikipedia editors will expect you to respond quickly when they leave you a message on your talk page, but you may not be checking your talk page frequently. That's why it's important to enable e-mail notifications. Here's how to do so:

1. Log in to your Wikipedia account.

2. Click on the "My preferences" link in the top right corner.

3. Scroll down on the "User profile" page to the last section, called "E-mail options".

4. Enter your e-mail address in the box provided.

5. Check "E-mail me when my user talk page is changed".

6. Click "Save".

7. You will receive an email that asks you to confirm that it is your email address. Click on the link in that email to confirm the change.

## Remember!

- Sign your post with four tildes: ~~~~

- If you leave a message on a talk page, be sure you check that page within a day or two to see if you've received a reply.

- Enable email notifications.

- For more information on using talk pages, visit: **http://enwp.org/WP:TPHELP**

# Wikipedia Education Program

# Choosing an article

Determining what Wikipedia article you should work on can be a challenge. Here are some best practices that have worked well for other students.

Just what makes a good Wikipedia article? Make sure you familiarize yourselves with the structure of a typical Wikipedia article in your discipline, so you know what types of sections you will be expected to contribute. Before you start to write, think about how information is structured in encyclopedias, and how that may be different from a more traditional research paper you are familiar with.

## Do's

- Choose a topic that is well established in the discipline, but only weakly represented on Wikipedia. If there is a lot of literature available on the topic, but only a small amount of that information exists on Wikipedia, that is the best situation to work from.

- Look for articles rated "stub" or "start" class on Wikipedia's internal assessment process. You can see an article's assessment by visiting its talk page.

- Make sure you search for a few different variants on the term before creating an article. Often, you may find that a topic has already been covered under a different name.

- If you're updating an existing article and want to work in your sandbox, copy over the existing text into your sandbox first. Work to enhance what has already been added by other editors instead of rewriting the entire article.

## Don'ts

- Avoid trying to improve articles on very broad topics (e.g., law) or articles that are already of high quality on Wikipedia ("Featured Articles"). These topics are more challenging to improve effectively.

- Don't try to improve topics that are highly controversial, like global warming, abortion, or Scientology. Contentious topics often lead to fights on Wikipedia. Instead, consider working on one of the existing sub-articles to bring more detail to a particular facet of the topic.

- Avoid working on topics that are only sparsely covered by literature. You will have a difficult time providing enough reliable sources to create a Wikipedia article.

- Don't start articles with titles that imply an essay-like approach, such as "The Effects That The Recent Sub-Prime Mortgage Crisis has had on the US and Global Economics" instead of "Subprime mortgage crisis." Wikipedia is an encyclopedia, and essays are not appropriate.

- Try not to rewrite or completely rework existing articles. Instead, you should work with the existing text, changing where necessary, to build a stronger article. Articles built this way will benefit from true collaboration.

# Wikipedia Education Program

# How to get help

## Are you stuck? Need help figuring out where to go next? Follow these guidelines!

For most kinds of help on Wikipedia—technical questions; policies and guidelines; etiquette; conflicts with editors; feedback and reviews of your work—the first place you should turn is the talk page for your course. On the course talk page, you can also see what questions and requests for feedback your classmates posted, and you may be able to learn from the answers they got or answer their questions yourself. If you're working with an experienced Wikipedian to help you get started, you can also leave a message on his or her user talk page.

*1. Go to your course page, click the "Talk" tab, and post your question or request in a new section. Be sure to sign your post with four tildes (~~~~) and enter an edit summary before you save it.*

*2. If you're working with an experienced Wikipedian, leave a message on their talk page, and let them know that you've just posted a request on the course talk page.*

*3. If you don't get a response within a day or two, ask your instructor.*

For immediate help, you may want to try live IRC chat: the #wikipedia-en-classroom or #wikipedia-en-help channels on Freenode.

If you have conflicts with another editor that you don't want to post about publicly, try talking with your instructor or any experienced Wikipedians your class is working with.

For subject-specific questions related to your course, talk to your instructor(s), teaching assistants, and classmates.

## Glossary of places to get help

- Article talk pages – The talk pages of articles are typically where discussions about the content of articles take place. Other editors may leave messages about your work here. If someone reverts changes you make to an article, the talk page is where you should start a discussion. Put it on your watchlist!

- Campus Ambassadors – If your class is working with one or more Campus Ambassadors, the Ambassador(s) may hold office hours to meet with you to discuss problems and questions about Wikipedia.

- Course talk page – This is the main place for discussing your assignments, posting problems or questions that come up, and giving and receiving feedback about your articles. Put it on your watchlist!

- Wikipedia:Help desk – This page is an additional forum for getting help from Wikipedians.

- Help:Contents – The is the hub of Wikipedia's extensive collection of help pages. You can browse or do a search for the particular topic you're looking for help with.

- Wikipedia:Teahouse – This is a friendly space for newcomers where you can ask questions and get to know other editors.

- IRC channels – These are chatrooms where experienced Wikipedians can often give you immediate help or advice. #wikipedia-en-help and #wikipedia-en-classroom are good places to start looking for help.

- WikiProject talk pages – These are message boards for users interested in editing articles about particular topics.

# Citing sources on Wikipedia

**Wikipedia Education Program**

Citations are critical to make content on Wikipedia reliable. Here's how to cite sources in the articles on which you are working.

A core principle of Wikipedia is that facts added to the encyclopedia must be verifiable. In other words, everything you write on Wikipedia must be attributable to a reliable source, like a peer-reviewed journal, a book, or a mainstream newspaper article.

In general, you should be citing at least once per paragraph you contribute to Wikipedia, but any quotations, hard facts like statistics, or potentially contentious claims must be cited. Any information you add that is not cited to a source may be deleted from Wikipedia, so it's important to ensure that you add proper citations to your work.

Remember, Wikipedia forbids original research. That means it is wrong to connect two pieces of information you get from different sources to reach a new conclusion. Instead, find a source that draws that conclusion on its own and cite that source. Take this sentence, for example: "The World Anti-Doping Agency was set up in 1990[1], but doping in professional sports rose throughout the 1990s[2]." Although each of the facts may come from the cited sources, they are combined in a way that implies a conclusion that isn't found in either source.

## Before you begin

Look for a few Featured Articles or Good Articles in the subject area in which you're writing, and see how the authors of those article cite sources. Some disciplines, such as the biomedical sciences, have additional sourcing requirements (type WP:MEDRS into the search bar to see these). Some favor in-text attribution, where you add the name of the author into the sentence in which you add the fact you got from that author (see WP:INTEXT for more information).

There is no single acceptable style on Wikipedia, like MLA or APA style, as you may be used to in your university courses.

You should, however, maintain a consistent style throughout the article, so if you are expanding an existing article, take care to ensure all references are in the same style. When expanding an existing article, take care to not remove any citations previous editors added to the article. One easy way to ensure consistency in style — and to add your citations in general — is to use the citation toolbar.

## Using the citation toolbar

To access the toolbar, click the word "Cite" on the editing window toolbar. That will provide a dropdown that offers templates for websites, newspapers, books, and journals, the most common sources used on Wikipedia. If you click one of these, you will see a form asking you for the important information to provide in your citation. Fill out the form.

In the box that says "Ref name", give a short name for this particular source. You can then use this short name as the citation any other time you cite that source. To do so, put your cursor at the location you want to add a footnote, and click the "Named references" button on the toolbar. Select the appropriate short name you've given for that reference from the dropdown.

At the end of your article, add a section called `==References==`. Underneath that section, type in: `{{Reflist}}`. The tool will automatically format and list all of the full citations you have added along the way from the citation toolbar.

## See also

For more information, see the following:

- What are reliable sources? http://enwp.org/WP:RS

- Referencing for beginners: http://enwp.org/WP:REFB

- More on citing sources: http://enwp.org/WP:CITE

# Avoiding plagiarism on Wikipedia

**Wikipedia Education Program**

Wikipedia policy forbids close paraphrasing and copying and pasting from most sources. Here's what you need to know to avoid running into trouble.

It's wrong to use someone else's words and claim them as your own; that's called plagiarism, and in most universities, it is a violation of your academic honor code. Wikipedia forbids plagiarism, too, and because of its collaborative nature — articles are written, revised, and rearranged by many different users — you must take extra care to avoid introducing plagiarism in the form of close paraphrasing, where your words follow the source too closely.

## Respect volunteer time

Be mindful of the thousands of volunteer hours that have gone into making Wikipedia a great resource, and please take extra care to avoid making a mistake that will cost volunteers valuable time. The standard way Wikipedians deal with plagiarism from students is to notify the instructor and remove some or all of the student's contributions.

## Quotations

Large block quotations are less prevalent on Wikipedai than they are in academic writing. Spend the effort to summarize and paraphrase the main ideas from the original author's work, with a citation. In cases where there is a specific phrasing that is important, a short quotation can be used.

## Close paraphrasing

Many students unintentionally run into problems with close paraphrasing when they try writing on Wikipedia for the first time because they are used to simply quoting extensively. Paraphrasing without plagiarizing is a skill that takes some practice to master. If you have the source material in front of you, it can be easy for you to mimic the structure and word choice of the original author, even unconsciously. But such **copying of words, structure, or phrases from the original source — even when cited to the original source — violates Wikipedia's copyright policies and is a form of plagiarism**. You'll need to be conscious of how you're writing to ensure you're not accidentally running afoul of guidelines.

## An example of close paraphrasing

**Original text:** *Because the weather forecast called for rain, the league decided to switch the location of the game to an indoor facility.*

**Close paraphrased text, not acceptable on Wikipedia:** *The league switched the game's location to an indoor facility due to a weather forecast calling for rain.*

**Acceptable text:** *Forecasted rain caused the league to move the game indoors.*

## Tips and tricks

- Material in your sandbox is still subject to Wikipedia's policies, so do not copy and paste information from your sources into your sandbox.

- Start by taking notes of key concepts, not phrases, from your sources, noting where each came from. Write the draft from your notes rather than from the original source, so you are not unconsciously mimicking the original author's structure or diction.

- The more sources you use, the better you'll gain an understanding of the topic and will be able to paraphrase and summarize in your own words.

- When you've finished your draft, read it with your sources close by. Ensure that everything you've written is substantially different in style from your sources.

## For more information

See these pages on Wikipedia to learn more:

- http://enwp.org/WP:Close_paraphrasing

- http://enwp.org/WP:Plagiarism

- http://enwp.org/WP:Quotations

# Wikipedia Education Program

# Adding images to articles

Good Wikipedia articles contain illustrations that help explain the topic visually. Here's how to find and add an image to your Wikipedia article.

## Finding images

Images used in Wikipedia articles are stored on Wikimedia Commons, which contains millions of photos and other media files that are available for use on Wikipedia and beyond. To illustrate an article, you can:

• Use an image that is already on Commons, or

• Upload a new public domain or freely licensed image to Commons.

Commons may already have the perfect image for you. Do some searches on **commons.wikimedia.org** to see if it has what you need. Browsing related Wikipedia articles can also be a good way to find relevant images.

You can upload a new image to Commons if:

• If you made it yourself and it isn't based on another copyrighted work, or

• If it is in the public domain (which is the case with many U.S. Federal Government works, as well images first published before 1923), or

• It has been released under a Wikipedia-compatible license (see the handout on finding freely licensed images for more information).

In general, Wikipedia only uses freely licensed or public domain images. For limited exceptions where non-free images can be used, see: http://enwp.org/WP:NFC

## Uploading an image

To upload an image to Wikimedia Commons:

1. Log in to your Wikipedia account.

2. Go to **commons.wikimedia.org**.

3. Click "Upload file" in the left sidebar (in the "Participate" section).

4. The Upload Wizard will walk you through uploading and describing the file.

## Adding your image to an article

Once your file is on Commons, you can insert it into an article using its file name (which begins "File:" and ends with an image extension like ".jpg").

The basic code for adding an image is:

```
[[File:Example file.jpg | thumb | This is
the caption.]]
```

Add the image code above the paragraph where you want the image to appear.

Image captions should be concise, descriptive, and relevant to the accompanying article text. The "thumb" parameter is displaying the image in the standard Wikipedia format (at a default size, with a small border and a caption beneath).

For more advanced image display options (such as changing the size or location of the image), see: http://enwp.org/WP:PIC

# Moving out of your sandbox

**Wikipedia Education Program**

**When your article is a good start, with a few solid, well-sourced paragraphs giving an overview of the topic, it's time to move it into Wikipedia proper.**

Don't spend any longer than necessary in your sandbox. Being part of Wikipedia means other editors will pay more attention to new developments. It's much easier to fix problems early on, when an article is still small, than to try to repair problems in a large article that is added all at once. The ideal time to move is just shortly after you start writing.

## How to move your article

1. Determine the title for your article. Look at similar topics to find an appropriate name. Avoid unnecessary capitalization, which is usually only needed for proper nouns.

2. Go to your sandbox article by clicking "My sandbox" in the upper right navigation links. In the pulldown menu near the search box, choose "Move".

3. From the dropdown that currently says "User", choose "(Article)" instead.

4. Put the title into the "to new title" input box that currently says "YourUserName/sandbox".

5. Explain the reason for the move. For example, "I'm moving my sandbox article into Wikipedia."

6. Click "Move page".

Note that in order to move a page into Wikipedia (or create a new article directly) your account must be at least 4 days old with at least 10 edits. If you aren't able to move the page yourself, you can ask another editor to do it for you.

# Did You Know submissions

The "Did you know" (DYK) process is used to create a section of Wikipedia's Main Page, which features facts from recently created or expanded Wikipedia articles.

Advanced students participating in the Wikipedia Education Program are encouraged to submit their articles to the DYK process. Not all student articles will meet the criteria, and incomplete or erroneous submissions waste valuable volunteer time, so be sure to double check that your article meets the requirements before you submit.

## How DYK works

Individual DYK entries—"hooks"—are submitted to the DYK nomination page, usually by the person who wrote or expanded the article, to be checked by other editors. If problems are found, they must be fixed before the article can appear on the Main Page. Once you address all problems, your hook will make its way to the front of the queue—this usually takes several days—and it will appear on the Main Page for several hours.

## Requirements for DYK eligibility

Two kinds of articles are eligible: newly created articles, and recently expanded articles that have grown by a factor of five.

DYK articles must:

• have at least 1500 characters worth of prose;

• be nominated within 5 days of when they were created (or moved into Wikipedia from a sandbox) or the beginning of when they were expanded 5-fold;

• use reliable sources as references, including inline citations to the facts mentioned in the proposed hook;

• be neutral; and

• conform to the core policies of Verifiability, Living Person Biographies and Copyrights—meaning they are based on reliable sources, do not violate the rules about biographies of living people, and have no problems with close paraphrasing or copyright violations of images and/or text.

## Nomination procedure

To nominate an article, follow the instructions at DYK suggestions page: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Template_talk:Did_you_know (shortcut: search for "T:TDYK").

1. Compose a hook of no more 200 characters including wiki markup, presenting an interesting fact from the article. It should answer the question "Did you know…", taking the form "… that lorem ipsum dolor?" with wikilinks to the nominated article (in bold) and other relevant articles.

2. In the "How to post a new nomination" section, enter the title of your article and press "Create nomination", then fill out the template form and save the page. For example:

```
{{subst:NewDYKnomination
| article = Noise pollution in the United States
| hook = ... that the [[Office of Noise Abatement
and Control]] is responsible for for fighting
'''[[noise pollution in the United States]]'''?
| status = new
| author = PolicyRocker15
}}
```

3. Edit the section of the nomination page for the day the article was created or expanded, and add the completed nomination to the top of the section, using the code {{Did you know nominations/Your article title}}.

4. Review another DYK nomination: check that it meets the requirements, add suggestions for improving the hook, and edit your own nomination to note which one you reviewed.

5. Check back on your nomination over the next several days to see if any problems need to be fixed.

6. Once your article has been approved, check the queue to see when it will appear on the Main Page.