17 You Are Good for Wikipedia

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Overview

In a previous *Writing Spaces* essay entitled, "Wikipedia Is Good for You!?," James P. Purdy introduces us to the idea that the online encyclopedia, often devalued in educational spaces, can serve as a starting place for research and a process guide to research-based writing.[1] By observing how Wikipedia editors review each other's work, have conversations about that work, and then revise accordingly, students like you can gain first-hand access and insights into professional writing and research practices that can be applied to research projects. In this chapter, we build on Purdy's essay by acknowledging not only how Wikipedia is good for you but, conversely, how you are good for Wikipedia. This chapter differs from Purdy's contribution in that we discuss how you can become more engaged in the Wikipedia community through various editing and evaluating practices. We want you to consider how you are good for the encyclopedia project in three ways. First, you can diversify the encyclopedia through your participation. Second, you can leverage your access to reputable academic sources of knowledge to improve coverage of certain topics. Third, you can apply critical thinking skills you learn in your writing class to help evaluate information in Wikipedia. Finally, we conclude the essay by providing two examples of our former students who effectively contributed to Wikipedia by connecting their own experiences and identities to their work in the encyclopedia.

Introduction

> **Jamie Withorne**
> @jamiewithorne   •••
>
> My middle school teacher who yelled that "Wikipedia
> wasn't a reliable source" every day is sharing vaccine
> conspiracy theories on Facebook.
>
> 8:52 PM · Feb 11, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone
>
> ___
>
> **41.7K** Retweets   **1,317** Quote Tweets   **424.5K** Likes

Figure 1. A screenshot of a tweet dated February 2021 from Jamie Withorne (@jamiewithorne) reads, "My middle school teacher who yelled that 'Wikipedia wasn't a reliable source' every day is sharing vaccine conspiracy theories on Facebook."

Check out the tweet above. After you read the actual text, you might notice that, at the time we took the screenshot, this tweet had been liked over 424,500 times and retweeted 41,700 times. Maybe it's gotten even more engagement since.

So, what's remarkable about this tweet? We can't speak for all Twitter users out there, but we can say that this is probably a common enough experience that resonated with people across the Internet, not only in terms of Wikipedia's reliability but also misinformation issues. The tweet mentioned above probably makes people think about some of their own school experiences. Maybe it makes them reflect on issues related to authority and credibility regarding factual information. More than likely, many of the Twitter users that engaged with the tweet did so because they recognized just how much things have changed in the past 10-20 years when it comes to evaluating online sources. But what role does Wikipedia play in all of this?

In Wikipedia, contributors must carefully check their sources to ensure credibility and reliability; otherwise, the information will be removed. As you read this sentence, Wikipedia "develops at a rate of over 1.9 edits per second, performed by editors from all over the world" ("Wikipedia:Statistics"). In fact, the encyclopedia is now both the largest and most widely used in history. In the English language version alone, an average of nearly 600 new articles are created every day. As we write this sentence, the En-

glish version includes more than 6,480,638 articles on every topic imaginable ("Wikipedia:Statistics"). That's over 91 times larger than *Encyclopedia Britannica* ("Wikipedia:Size"). Maybe you've heard of it? Significant as the longest-running print encyclopedia in the English language, *Britannica* was continuously printed for 244 years. Yet it doesn't come close to the scope and size of Wikipedia. And while the English language edition of Wikipedia is the most comprehensive and widely accessed, Wikipedia also exists in over 270 other language versions ("Wikipedia:Statistics").

Not only has Wikipedia grown in terms of size over the last two decades since its founding, but the encyclopedia has also matured in terms of accuracy and reliability into what some have called the "Internet's good grown-up" (Harrison), a community that "exists to battle fake news" (Forsyth), and "the last best place on the Internet" (Cooke). Moreover, plenty of scientific studies have shown that Wikipedia is at least as accurate as other encyclopedias and perhaps even more reliable (Brown; Casebourne et al.; Giles; Hwang et al.; Kräenbring et al.; Taraborelli).

Despite all of this, you've likely been told never to use Wikipedia for school projects. Right? It's probably not surprising that Wikipedia was criticized (Gorman) and, in some cases, banned (Cohen) from educational uses. So why the bad rap? Why is Wikipedia still looked down upon, especially by teachers and other academics? James P. Purdy explains the problem that some academics have with Wikipedia in another *Writing Spaces* essay entitled, "Wikipedia Is Good for You!?":

> Usually, teachers do not like two primary aspects of Wikipedia. The first is its open participation: anyone, regardless of background, qualifications, or expertise, can write Wikipedia articles…The second aspect of Wikipedia that many teachers do not like is its changeability: Wikipedia articles do not remain the same over time. (207-208)

What Purdy calls "open participation" is probably the biggest reason it has taken so long for Wikipedia to become more widely recognized as a trustworthy and reliable source. The fact that anyone can make changes to the encyclopedia makes us wonder whether the person writing about a particular topic is knowledgeable about that topic. But the larger purpose of his essay is to explain how Wikipedia can help you, as a writing student, better understand how to use the encyclopedia as 1) a source, and 2) a process guide for researching and writing. It is useful for you to know that Wikipedia can be helpful as a starting place for your research. The processes Wikipedia editors take on when contributing to the encyclopedia

are similar to those students should engage in when working on a research assignment.

In this essay, we build on Purdy's work by helping you understand how *your* engagement and contributions to Wikipedia can help the encyclopedia. Not only is *Wikipedia* good for you, as Purdy suggests, but *you* are good for Wikipedia. We believe that Wikipedia's openness, the fact that anyone can contribute, is the encyclopedia's biggest strength. And we want to encourage you to think more deeply about how you can help the Wikipedia project in three specific ways. First, you can improve its diversity. Next, your access to reputable academic knowledge sources enables you to build on its content. Finally, you can apply critical thinking skills that you are learning in your writing or research class to help make the encyclopedia more trustworthy. In the following sections, we discuss how you are good for Wikipedia in these three ways. We ultimately argue that your engagement with the encyclopedia is vital to its continued success. In the conclusion of this essay, we include the voices of other students like you who have learned how to edit Wikipedia and include screenshot images of their contributions.

You Are Good for Wikipedia's Diversity Problem

First, while the encyclopedia has come a long way in creating the most comprehensive reference source in history, it still suffers from problems related to what the community calls "systemic biases." More on this later, but the overall problem that causes these biases is that most of Wikipedia's editors are middle-aged, white males whose primary language is English. Because those editors work on topics they are most interested in, other topics or content areas are not represented. If you are reading this as a student, you are probably outside of at least one of those social categories (if not more than one). Your identity (your lived experiences, interests, values, etc.) makes you well-positioned to contribute to Wikipedia, in ways big and small, to develop and focus attention on parts of the encyclopedia that have been overlooked in terms of representing diverse inclusive viewpoints.

So, about those systemic biases. Although Wikipedia calls itself the online encyclopedia "that anyone can edit," it turns out that most people editing (especially the English language version) are male, old(er), and white. You can imagine that these folks probably have a background in technology. Heather Ford and Judy Wajcman, in a research article entitled "'Anyone Can Edit,' Not Everyone Does: Wikipedia's Infrastructure and the Gender Gap," published in the journal *Social Studies of Science,*

explore how the overwhelmingly male editorship of the encyclopedia leads to unbalanced coverage and inclusion of people and topics. One powerful example is the lack of coverage of biographical articles about women on Wikipedia. While the statistics are constantly changing, at the time of this writing, it is widely accepted that less than 20% of biographical articles in the encyclopedia cover women (Tripodi). Leigh Gruwell argues in a related article that Wikipedia may discourage women from editing due to its insistence on neutrality or a "Neutral Point of View," which prohibits subjective and/or embodied ways of writing and knowledge-making (for example, personal essays that draw from the author's own experience). Wikipedia's gender gap, as it has come to be known, can be understood as a kind of omission—something missing—in the coverage of topics related to women or women's issues. Remember that the encyclopedia runs on volunteer labor. People edit and improve topics that they are interested in and connect to. And this is a good thing! Wikipedia needs self-motivated people like this that take an interest in a topic to make edits and continually improve the encyclopedia's content. But as long as the group of people reading, engaging, and writing the encyclopedia remains somewhat uniform and stagnant (without a large influx of diversity of identity along the social categories mentioned above), there will always be a problem concerning the issues that are represented well and those that are not represented at all.

Another good example of how the gender gap plays out on Wikipedia is the story of Donna Strickland, a Canadian optical physicist. She was the third woman to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics ("Donna Strickland"). Although Strickland had an influential and significant career until being awarded the Nobel Prize, she did not have a Wikipedia article devoted to her until *after* being awarded the Nobel (Bazely). This is a problem for many reasons: gender gap and bias, level of recognizability, the prestige of an award, and marginalization, to name a few. In Wikipedia, male contributors tend to create and edit articles about other dudes. Even more problematic, women are sometimes seen as less notable because of a lack of secondary coverage in sources outside Wikipedia.

This is where you come in. As we mentioned above, if you are reading this as part of a writing course, chances are you are already more diverse than the average Wikipedia editor. You might be younger or have a different gender, sexual, or racial identity. You might come from a challenging socioeconomic background. You might identify as disabled, neurodiverse, or a person with a disability. You might speak multiple languages. You might be diverse in other ways due to your background, past experiences,

identity, family, or something else. Diversity is not one thing only, and it is not always visible to others. When engaging Wikipedia, bringing *your identity* to the table can help because the encyclopedia is only as good as the people involved. The community needs multiple volunteers and people with diverse interests, experiences, and identities to contribute to the full breadth of knowledge representation. Our discussion section discusses one specific way you can leverage your identity to improve Wikipedia. Take a look at it and consider engaging.

You Are Good for Wikipedia Because You Have Access to Academic Knowledge

As a student, you have enormous access to knowledge—much more than the average person. Wikipedia articles are most useful (and trustworthy) when they use reliable secondary sources (like academic books or other sources found through a library or library database). For example, you might have run across a "[Citation needed]" tag in a Wikipedia article. This means that another editor has noticed how a statement needs a source to back it up. You can help by adding citations from diverse researchers and other authors while exploring a wide range of reputable, published sources. By tapping into your university's resources, you can evaluate or even improve Wikipedia articles with current and trustworthy information. You can also share the knowledge access you have with the world since Wikipedia is published freely, and anyone with an Internet connection can benefit from its pages.

Think of yourself as the Golden Gate bridge for knowledge equity. You have access to information often unavailable to those outside the college context because of various "paywalls" and restrictions. That way, you are opening a whole new horizon to those not part of academic institutions. We draw from Wikipedia and rhetoric scholar Melanie Kill to support this claim. In a book chapter covering this specific topic, Kill argues that "Wikipedia provides students with a range of opportunities to work as intermediaries between the disciplinary expertise they are studying, a public system of knowledge curation, and a global audience of readers" (389). Not only can you provide access by adding information that would not otherwise be available, but by adhering to the "Neutral Point of View writing style," you can also make that information more accessible (that is, understandable) for global audiences. Furthermore, Wikipedia does not ask you for a subscription or a fee to read its articles. Instead, it encourages you to use, edit, and widely distribute its content.

We suspect that you are probably hesitant (and maybe anxious) to edit a Wikipedia article. And you are not alone. We have heard firsthand from students about the difficulty of accepting Wikipedia as a credible source, as many were told in high school not to use it as a reference (Vetter and Moroz). Or perhaps you are not ready to jump into editing because you are not familiar with the objective, neutral, and factual writing style of Wikipedia (Vetter and Moroz). And that is all OK. We are not asking you to be the next Steven Pruitt (the person with the highest number of Wikipedia edits), but we want you to recognize your resourcefulness and try to add a credible source, edit a small section, or even go big and start an article on an underrepresented topic. Your contributions can be as small as fixing a typo or copy-editing an article or more substantial—integrating new sources, adding images, adding content to underdeveloped articles, or creating new articles altogether. We are confident you can do all that and more!

Now, let's turn to the practical steps you can take to improve the online encyclopedia. If you decide to add a source, you may wonder what a good source in Wikipedia should look like? First, it should be a reliable source. Textbooks, literature reviews, books, or publications written by experts in the field and published by reliable publishers are appropriate. You should not use blog posts, press materials intended to show something in a certain light, or popular press articles, as they tend to be heavily opinionated or biased ("Wikipedia:Reliable"). Remember that Wikipedia wants you to write in an objective and neutral, not subjective style.

When you get to editing, use plain language, be brief, cite sources to back up factual claims, and attribute viewpoints to the people who hold them. You should avoid making conclusions, except when attributed to a specific source. You can paraphrase, use direct quotes, summarize, or transform information from the source, but you still need to make sure you give credit to the author.

While article development in Wikipedia is mainly about generating neutral and fact-based information, many encyclopedia aspects engage you in critical thinking, analysis, and communication, for example, by participating in writing spaces such as talk pages and in-class reflective writing. As you become involved in Wikipedia as a reader, contributor, editor, or writer, you start to understand many processes of creating an article. Wikipedia is unique because it is transparent to anyone in terms of its policies, guidelines, processes, and philosophies, and this transparency can help you better understand how the community works (Vetter and Moroz).

You Are Good for Wikipedia Because
You Are a Critical Thinker

Suppose you're learning about and practicing critical thinking skills in your writing class. In that case, you can apply these skills to evaluate both online sources and Wikipedia articles themselves to help improve the encyclopedia's trustworthiness. Unless you have been living under a rock for the past few years, it is painfully clear that most social media platforms are susceptible to issues related to problematic information (things like fake news, propaganda, and misinformation). Need an example? Think about how a former president's claims about bleach as a protectant against COVID-19 spread on Facebook and other social media platforms. Wikipedia is, in some ways, immune to these kinds of things precisely because it has several policies for what makes a reliable source. By helping to evaluate and improve the encyclopedia, you can create a better alternative for reference information.

Your knowledge of digital tools, platforms, and search skills is invaluable when finding and evaluating information. You probably have already used Wikipedia for your queries and could prove to others that Wikipedia can help you answer various questions. Kill acknowledges, "It is often the case that Wikipedia is among the first places students end up when they are looking for information, but seldom do they imagine they might be in a position to curate [or create] knowledge" (404). Can you relate to that? Since Wikipedia has helped you in many ways to get answers to your questions and provided you with information, now it is your turn to pay it forward. Wikipedia needs you to critically assess its contents and improve it, one step at a time.

First, you are capable of spotting if a news piece or an article does not seem to be genuine or valid. You can then use your research skills to find better evidence in the form of secondary sources to back up or disprove that misinformation. Your writing instructor has taught you a thing or two about the credibility of sources and rhetorical situations. This knowledge will help you provide meaningful contributions either in adding a source to Wikipedia or editing the entire article, whatever you choose. When they work to improve a Wikipedia article in a classroom assignment, our students have found that they gain experience in both "looking hard to find research" and "making sure the sources I did find were credible." The way this student describes the process of contributing to Wikipedia, especially the research process, provides an important lesson in critical thinking and source evaluation. Wikipedia articles do not just become "reliable" or

"trustworthy" on their own. Their credibility comes from a whole lot of things working together: individual editors like the one we quoted above, who are trying to be careful about the sources they use to contribute; the various references used to build the article; the sources that those references are relying on and their backgrounds, and on and on. This notion of what makes something reliable can be better understood if we move away from traditional strategies for source evaluation that focus on only one source at a time.

One model for evaluating sources that you are probably familiar with is the CRAAP test. It's memorable, right? The acronym stands for certain evaluative categories: Currency, Reliability, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose/Point of View, which may have been presented to you at a library session or even by your writing instructor. These are wonderful criteria for checking whether a single source is trustworthy and relevant for your research project. However, one thing they do not take into consideration is how the Internet and other new communication technologies have complicated things. It is not enough to evaluate a source by itself. As Dan Melzer discusses in another *Writing Spaces* essay entitled "Understanding Discourse Communities," we also need to consider sources within a broader community. For example, we might ask questions like:

- Is the source itself seen as reliable within a community of experts on the topic?
- What types of evidence (other sources) does the source rely on?
- Additionally, how and why is the source being shared online?

Ellen Carillo and Alice Horning also recommend this approach in their *Writing Spaces* essay from Volume 4: "Effectively and Efficiently Reading the Credibility of Online Sources." In this essay, Carillo and Horning draw from research about "lateral reading" (Wineburg and McGrew) as a better alternative to the CRAAP checklist. More specifically, they provide three steps for reading laterally to assess the credibility of online sources. These steps support the idea that we need to see sources as part of a larger community because all three ask you to "leave the site in question" to 1) determine whether the source "appears on other fact-checking or hoax-busting sites" (such as Snopes.com), 2) find out more about the author, and 3) "explore more about the site [or source] itself" (Carillo and Horning 40-41).

So how do we apply this kind of "lateral reading" for source evaluation to Wikipedia? First, Wikipedia is only as good as the secondary sources it draws from to build each article. When we go back to each source and read laterally across the source and the community or communities it takes

part in, we can more effectively evaluate its currency, authority, accuracy, and reliability. As you learn more about this process in your writing and research classes, you build the ability to help ensure Wikipedia's reliability and critically evaluate any information you come across, especially online and on your social media networks.

Hands-On Cases: Abby and Cheyenne

We realize that despite our best arguments, you still might have reservations about engaging with Wikipedia in this way or doubts about your abilities to edit and evaluate the encyclopedia. Therefore, in closing this essay, we want to share how two students, just like you, edited Wikipedia in a course we taught in the spring of 2019. Both students were enrolled in a first-year writing class at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where the two authors were co-teaching. Furthermore, despite initial concerns and even some worries, both students used their unique identities and experiences as resources for contributing to the encyclopedia and improving specific articles. In the following sections, we use the pseudonyms Abby and Cheyenne (which these students selected to be used in this essay), describing their work to improve Wikipedia articles and connecting that work to their own experiences and identities with excerpts from their written reflections about the project. And while Abby and Cheyenne might seem like "special cases" or "success stories,"—there are over 100,000 students like them that have worked on a Wikipedia assignment since 2010 ("Changing Classrooms").

Abby's Experience Editing the "Fender Telecaster" Article

As part of their coursework, students in Abby's class wrote a personal essay in which they reflected on their experience editing Wikipedia. Abby begins her essay by recalling previous experiences with Wikipedia in school environments: "Consistently, in both earlier and higher education," Abby writes, "many students, including myself, were told that Wikipedia has no place in the classroom and that it was not allowed to be used as a source because it was unreliable." However, she quickly dismisses these attitudes as "abhorrent and outdated" and proposes that Wikipedia should be "integrated into classrooms at any level of education." What is interesting about Abby's reflection, though, is how her attitude changed. Identifying as a transfer student, Abby confesses that she "had zero clue that [her] English

class could be about Wikipedia." However, despite having "doubts about a Wikipedia-centered class," she also recognizes that this approach represents a "great opportunity for students in higher education to learn about many different facets of writing." So, what happened to Abby that might explain this shift in her attitude? To answer this question, we might think further about how Abby was able to use her interests (a hobby, in this example) as a way to connect to the work she was doing in the encyclopedia.

As part of her Wikipedia-based writing project, Abby chose to update the article on "Fender Telecaster." In a class presentation, she explained this choice by discussing how she enjoys playing and learning about the guitar as a hobby. Connecting her experience and interest with the writing assignment further allowed her to make meaningful contributions to the article. Among other edits, Abby worked to create subsections in the article for different Telecaster model "variants," including the "B Bender Telecaster," the "Tele Sub-Sonic," the "Telecaster XII 12-String," and others. While student edits in Wikipedia, like any editor's contributions, are always subject to further revision or even deletion (in some cases), Abby's contributions have remained in the article. Other editors have even built on her contributions ("Fender Telecaster").

Cheyenne's Experience Editing the "Meadville, Pennsylvania" Article

Like Abby, Cheyenne's first reaction to being told that she would edit a Wikipedia article as part of a college writing assignment was disbelief. Her attitude about the online encyclopedia may even line up with what previous teachers have told you in high school or other college classes. "When I first started this class," Cheyenne writes, "I thought this might have been a joke since we were never allowed to use [Wikipedia] to get information or even use the sources that came from it." However, Cheyenne's attitude changed once she realized that the assignment was not, in fact, a joke and that she could leverage her interests to choose an article to work on. Cheyenne describes the experience of selecting an article to work on (her hometown of Meadville, Pennsylvania) and how she figured out what she could add in the following passage:

> When my professor originally introduced to us that we would be picking an article of something that interests ourselves...I thought let's look up Meadville (which is my hometown). When I got to the page, I noticed that most of the information was correct but what could be a section that I could add to make the history of Mead-

ville more interesting. It came across my mind when I thought I should add an attractions portion of it but only of things that Meadville did or has educational purposes. When editing my article, I felt like I was helping students and anyone else who would look up Meadville on Wikipedia to get true and real information while also sourcing my work as I go along.

As a first-year college student, Cheyenne often traveled back and forth between campus and her parents' house to see friends and family on the weekend. Once we realized that she was visiting the town that she was writing about, we suggested to her that she take some photos of the historical features of Meadville and upload them to Wikimedia Commons. Since this is the database used by Wikipedia for images and other media, Cheyenne could also add pictures of the landmarks she was writing about to her article (see Figures 2 and 3).

The Meadville Market House

Figure 2. This image of the Meadville Market House appears in Wikipedia's article "Meadville, Pennsylvania" titled "The Meadville Market House." Via Wikimedia Commons, CC-BY-SA 4.0.

A monument in the shape of a scroll
dedicated to the founder of Meadville,
David Mead

Figure 3. An image of a monument in Meadville, Pennsylvania, with a caption that reads, "A monument in the shape of a scroll dedicated to the founder of Meadville, David Mead." Via Wikimedia Commons, CC-BY-SA 4.0.

What Cheyenne's account tells us is this. First, personal experience (in Cheyenne's case, growing up in Meadville, Pennsylvania) can help students create a unique connection to and improve Wikipedia. Second, adding your photos to a Wikipedia article is a wonderful way to improve the encyclopedia. Finally, while Cheyenne was hesitant about the project at first, she ultimately realized its potential, writing in her reflection, "In my opinion, Wikipedia has a bright future coming if professors keep promoting it out to their students."

Conclusion

Acknowledging the many ways you can benefit from Wikipedia, we want you to consider several key points from the above discussion. First, you are good for Wikipedia because you have multiple aspects of your identity that could help you contribute to the expansion of diversity of the online encyclopedia. Second, your access to academic knowledge makes you a valuable source for those outside academia—everyday readers of Wikipedia. Third, your critical thinking skills are helpful in terms of evaluating the content of Wikipedia, recognizing misinformation, and providing credible sources to verify the facts.

By now, we hope you can understand just how unique you are for Wikipedia's space. Are you inspired to take on an editing task? Or do you feel the urge to email that middle school teacher who warned you not to use Wikipedia? We hope that you are empowered to edit, add, factcheck, copyedit, create, or simply talk to your peers, family, and friends about Wikipedia and what it is all about. Like Abby and Cheyenne, you can explore your interests, identities, and experiences about topics on Wikipedia. Remember: "You Are Good for Wikipedia." This affirmation especially works when you realize that your potential arises from your unique identity. Don't know where to start? Check out the discussion questions and activities we find useful when engaging in Wikipedia writing.

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Teacher Resources for "You Are Good for Wikipedia"

Overview and Teaching Strategies

This essay invites students to consider their potential in relation to contributing to and reading Wikipedia through three specific frames of interaction. First, by participating in the Wikipedia community, students bring a more diverse set of identities and positionalities compared to the current editorial demographic. Next, because students have access to academic libraries (and all the resources those institutions provide), they are well-positioned to bridge the uneven divide that currently exists between open access resources and closed or paywalled databases. Finally, because they are actively learning to become critical thinkers and evaluators, students can leverage skills like lateral reading to assess and improve the content, further boosting Wikipedia's credibility. While this essay would pair well with a course that invites students to research and add to an existing Wikipedia article, we also believe that it could serve students and teachers who might be engaging the encyclopedia as a discussion topic or low-stakes activity.

For instance, teachers might ask students to use the citation hunt tool (https://citationhunt.toolforge.org/), which identifies unsourced ("citation needed") statements, to add a reference to a Wikipedia article. In this example, the essay would work well in a larger unit related to online source evaluation, research, misinformation, or digital culture. Teachers interested in replacing a formal writing assignment with a Wikipedia-based project might consider assigning James P. Purdy's previous *Writing Spaces* essay "Wikipedia Is Good for You!?" before asking students to read this piece. Teachers should also be aware of a few organizations to reach out to for help in designing and implementing Wikipedia-based assignments.

Wiki Education (https://wikiedu.org) provides active support for instructors and students trying out Wikipedia-based education, including learning modules, teacher and student training, live advice for pedagogical design, etc. While the Wiki Education Foundation works with college instructors and students in the U.S. and Canada, the Wikipedia Education Program (https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia_Education_Program) serves educators at all levels worldwide. So, whether you want to jump into a more robust assignment or just skim the surface, teachers are

encouraged to check these resources and get involved in the communities that support them.

Suppose you would like to provide your students with a sample student reflection on their experiences with Wikipedia editing. In that case, you can share Abby's essay entitled "Wikipedia's Place in Higher Education" (https://wikiedu.org/blog/2019/07/09/wikipedias-place-in-higher-education/) published by Wiki Education.

Discussion Questions

1. Let's think back to your middle/high school years. Do you remember that mantra from your teacher: "Do not use Wikipedia for your papers"? What would you reply to that teacher today? How can you prove that Wikipedia is not bad for your writing? What would you say to that teacher after reading this essay?

2. What about Wikipedia's diversity problem? In what areas do you think you can contribute the most? Reflect on your own identities first, and then think about gender identity issues, race, discrimination, diversity, and inclusivity pertaining to Wikipedia's goal of representation. To get started, skim the "Gender Bias on Wikipedia" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_bias_on_Wikipedia) article to get an idea of what is going on.

3. In groups or with a partner, discuss possible roadblocks or challenges on your way to start editing Wikipedia and ways to overcome those.

4. Look up Wikipedia policies and guidelines related to "Neutral Point of View," "Reliable Sources," and "Verifiability." What do you learn about how the community works together to evaluate information and prevent the spread of misinformation?

5. As a group activity, create a plan for finding an article that needs improvement due to its lack of diverse representation or problematic positioning by adding an additional source, rephrasing some sentences, and/or expanding the topic. Next, look for credible sources in library databases and study them carefully. Finally, contribute to the article by adding an extra source or go big and edit some sentences, adding new relevant information.