

# Wikipedia Editing

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## Module Overview

- An introduction to Wikipedia
- Exploring Wikipedia's editor community and existing gender and racial biases
- How to edit a Wikipedia page and the types of pages
- Notability criteria of academics for a Wikipedia page

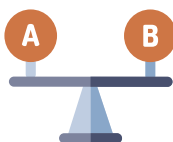
## Module Summary

- Wikipedia is a free, online encyclopedia with five pillars that is mainly built on neutral secondary sources.
- The majority of Wikipedia editors identify as English-speaking men who live in western countries. Less than 20% of the editors identify as women.
- There is a gender and racial gap on English Wikipedia, where less than 20% of the available biographies are about women and Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) individuals.
- Editing on Wikipedia is straightforward, and anyone can view the history of the changes and the user contributions of a page.
- The notability criteria for a Wikipedia page varies depending on the category. For academics specifically, they have to meet at least one criteria in the guidelines.

## The 5 Pillars of Wikipedia



Free Content



Neutral Point  
of View



Respect and  
Civility



Online  
Encyclopedia



Be Bold!

## What Can You Cite in Wikipedia?

- Wikipedia is a tertiary source that is mainly built on secondary references, such as books, academic journals, newspapers, and reliable online sources.
  - Journal articles that are open access are more likely to be referenced on English Wikipedia than paywall journal articles.
  - Good rule of thumb is to consider whether the source has gone through an editorial process.
- Sources must have a neutral point of view and be verifiable.
- Primary research, such as original research, should be avoided as a source (but this rule can be broken).

## Wikipedia Editor Demographic

**84%** of Wikipedia English editors identified as male, with the nine out of the top ten countries involved residing in a western countries, except India

**76%** of Wikipedia users edit in English and **51%** contribute in two or more languages

**49%** of Wikipedia users read in English

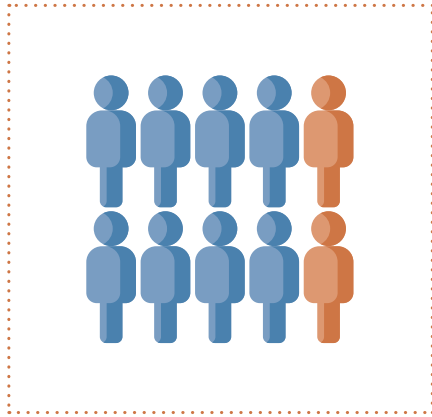
**59%** of the editors are **17 to 40** years old

**71%** of editors contribute because they want to volunteer to share knowledge

**69%** believe information should be freely available

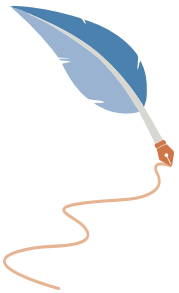
**63%** said contributing is fun

# Wikipedia's Gender and Racial Bias



- On English Wikipedia, less than 20% of the available biographies are about women, and this number worsens for articles on Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) individuals.
- In response, several initiatives, including 'Project Rewrite', were started to address the equity gap, and to tell the missing stories of women on Wikipedia and beyond.
- Katherine Mahler, a former CEO of the Wikimedia Foundation, said that ["Wikipedia mirrors the world's biases. It doesn't cause them."](#) which means that Wikipedia can only represent what is present in secondary sources.
  - In sum, if more women and BIPOCs are not in more leadership positions, receive awards, nominations, and other visibly recognized positions, they will not meet Wikipedia's notability criteria.

## Editing a Wikipedia Page



- Editing Wikipedia as a new contributor can be overwhelming, but do not worry, you cannot break anything!
  - Even if you accidentally delete the whole page, it can be recovered from the 'History'.
- As a new contributor, you can use your real name or a pseudonym.
- When editing a Wikipedia page, the editor has two options: HTML Editor or Visual Editor.
  - If you are not comfortable with HTML, the Visual Editor allows you to see the edits as how they would be shown on the page (similar to a Google Doc or a Word document).
- The Wikipedia Editing Toolbar at the top of each editing page has the usual basic editing features: undo/redo, paragraph formats, character formats, links, sources, insert (photos, files, etc.), symbols and help.
- Citations are automatic—when you copy and paste a URL, DOI, ISBN, etc., Wikipedia will pull the citation automatically.
  - If the citation cannot be pulled automatically, you will have to enter the information manually.
  - You can also select 'reuse' for sources instead of re-entering the citation every time.
- Once you have made your changes, remember to "Save changes".
  - If there are multiple editors on a page, the editor who saves first will have their edits show up, whereas the subsequent editors' edits may not show up.
  - When saving, there is an option to check off 'This is a minor edit', which is for small changes, such as a typo.
  - You can also follow the page you have edited for future changes if you select 'Watch this page' while saving.
- Each Wikipedia page allows you to explore 'Contributions' of past users and view the 'History' of all the edits made in the tabs beside the search bar of Wikipedia.
  - Sometimes, you can see conversations and drama, where editors go back and forth.
- In the case there is breaking news and unreliable information, Wikipedia will often lock the page and only allow people with two or more years of editing experience to edit it.

## Wikipedia Page Categories

Featured Article	Professional, outstanding, and thorough (often featured on Wikipedia homepage)
Good Article	Excellent, has undergone peer review
A-Class Article	Excellent
B-Class Article	Readers not left wanting
C-Class Article	A good start, exercise caution with references
Start-Class Article	Early in development
Stub-Class Article	Underdeveloped, may be unreliable, usually one sentence

## Notability

Notability on Wikipedia is based on the existence of suitable sources rather than the state of sourcing in an article. The guidelines for notability vary between different categories.

### Notability Criteria for Academics

The individual has met at least one criteria below:

- Research has had a significant impact in their scholarly discipline.
- Highly prestigious academic award or honour at a national or international level.
- Is or has been an elected member of a highly selective and prestigious scholarly society or association.
- Academic work has made a significant impact in the area of higher education, affecting a substantial number of academic institutions.
- Holds a named chair appointment or distinguished professor appointment at a major institution of higher education and research, or an equivalent position in countries where named chairs are uncommon.
- Held a highest-level elected or appointed administrative post at a major academic institution or major academic society.
- Substantial impact outside academia in their academic capacity.
- Has been the head or chief editor of a major, well-established academic journal in their subject area.

## Conflict of Interest

- Do not contribute to Wikipedia about yourself, family, friends, clients, employers, competitors, or and other relationships.
- How close a relationship is before it becomes a concern is governed by common sense.
- Disclose your conflict of interest.
- Do not edit articles directly: instead, propose changes by using the Talk page.



### Additional Reading(s):

- [Project Rewrite: Tell the missing stories of women on Wikipedia and beyond](#) by Adora Svitak
- [Wikipedia Edit-a-Thons](#) by 500 Women Scientists
- [Academic writes 270 Wikipedia pages in a year to get female scientists noticed](#) by The Guardian