

Wikipedia Project Completion

Anthropology 227
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The Wikipedia assignment is one of two *major* writing assignments for this course. The two pieces of written work will have approximately equal weight in your final grade. So, put any preconceptions you have about Wikipedia aside, and **work to the same standards** of research, drafting, editing, and presentation that you would for any other final course paper.

WRITING GOAL: As explained early on in the course, your goal for this assignment is to produce a page that meets the Good Article criteria (**WP:GA?**¹). That page explains these criteria, which can be summarized as well-written, with a defined structure, well-researched, broad in its coverage, and neutral. For technical reasons, we won't be requiring that the article be illustrated (criterion 6), although you may add images if you wish. Your article won't be judged on its stability from conflicting edits (criterion 5) either. As something of fall-back, read the B-class criteria on **WP:ASSESS**, as a minimum standard.

If you are expanding *one section* of an article, you are strongly advised to write a multi-paragraph summary and then expand the section into a sub-article as explained on **WP:SUMMARY**. You'll use a little trick called `{{Main}}` to link one to the other, which I can demonstrate in class.

Your final article should be comprehensive and engaging without being excessively detailed. Length is not the primary criterion for judging your work, but contributions of fewer than 2,000 words of added or thoroughly revised prose are inadequately short. Wikipedia recommends that their articles not exceed 40 thousand characters (roughly 8,000 words).

*For a primer on all this, with lots of detailed links, read the page on Article Development (**WP:ARTDEV**), or the shorter brochure "Evaluating Wikipedia" included on that page.*

ORGANIZATION: The article you produce must have an appropriately formatted and concise lead section that summarizes the overall content and a well-organized structure that allows easy access to information about a broad set of aspects of the topic at hand. Read over **WP:LAYOUT**, **WP:LEAD**, **WP:BODY**, and **MOS:HEAD** before you complete your first draft of the article.

First Checkpoint: Post a complete outline of the article (using section headers of various levels) and post it to your userspace by March 22.

Second Checkpoint: Ensure that your first-draft version of the full article has a lead that complies with **WP:LEAD**.

SOURCES: You need to seriously research the topic, seeking out secondary sources, including (unless unavailable) those in peer-reviewed journals and published books. Review "Identifying Reliable Sources" (**WP:RS**) and work from the top-down in terms of the kinds of sources most preferred for use on Wikipedia.

First Checkpoint: You must post a bibliography of at least ten sources you plan to use to your talk page or the article's talk page by March 22. Provide the reference information, not just weblinks.

Second Checkpoint: Your draft article should include specific facts directly referenced to at least five of these sources.

REVISED WRITING DEADLINES: You should have five fully referenced paragraphs in user-space or the actual article space by March 22. Full first drafts must be available to begin peer review during the week that follows, posted no later than March 29. Further schedule revision will be shared with the class soon.

PEER REVIEW: We will revise the schedule for reviewing other's work. Those students who have substantial content posted this week will begin to receive feedback from their classmates next week. Peer

¹ This document will refer to Wikipedia project pages like this: **WP:GA?** or **WP:ASSESS**. To view such a page, just enter the entire text, including the WP and the colon, in the search box in the upper-right corner of any English Wikipedia page.

review remains a requirement of the assignment.

SUPPLEMENTARY ASSIGNMENTS: The reflective essay on your Wikipedia contributions is waived as a requirement. However, completing such an essay will be a way to make up for any requirements early on in the course that preceded the main article. We will post a revised grading distribution later this week.

INCORPORATING EXISTING WIKIPEDIA TEXT and PLAGIARISM: You must be completely transparent about incorporating any text that is already on Wikipedia in your article. (This includes the text that pre-existed the assignment, as well as text on other relevant pages.) When we evaluate the assignment, such text will only be considered as a way of making sure the article is broad in scope and complete its coverage of major issues. When you add text from elsewhere on Wikipedia, you **must** make sure that your edit summaries include a phrase like “Text copied from <name of article>.”

For both legal and intellectual reasons, neither copying nor closely paraphrasing copyrighted source material are permitted on Wikipedia. (Read **WP:PLAGIARISM** and **WP:PARAPHRASE**.) Under the encyclopedia’s rules: Direct incorporation of the text from outside sources is plagiarism. Closely paraphrasing another person’s presentation of an issue is also plagiarism. All facts and non-original arguments must be properly cited.

In all your work on the Wikipedia assignment, Vanderbilt’s even higher standards against plagiarism (which apply to public domain sources, as well) **remain in force**. Your words and thoughts must be your own, based on your own reading of the materials you cite. Our course’s plagiarism policy is in the syllabus. You are responsible for understanding plagiarism and how to avoid it. Apparent violations will be referred *directly* to the Honor Council.

The following applies to six students who have not chosen an article topic, chose an existing article which is of high-quality, or who have a topic conflict with another student.

Required topic changes: If a high-quality (B-class or above) article already exists for your topic, there is simply no room for you to demonstrate the same kind of contribution to Wikipedia as other students, and you must choose a new topic. If you have already completed substantial preparatory research, consult with the instructor about making a specialized page on one issue related to that well-covered topic. If not, follow the instructions in the next paragraph.

As of March 15, several of you have not announced topics. You must check in with your chosen topic (having already consulted its page on Wikipedia) by March 18, or choose from a list provided by the instructor.