

Using Wikipedia for research



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Wikipedia – its potential and pitfalls

- Anyone can edit, so it has the potential to be crowdsourcing at its best – but what does this mean for reliability?
- Subjected to ‘peer review’ – but that process is only as good/neutral as the editors looking at a page
- Has the potential to be completely up-to-date
- Transparent – you can see the full edit history of a page, as well as any discussions relating to it, and you can ask questions

Identifying a reliable article

- Be guided by [‘good article’ \(GA\) criteria](#) and look for things like:
 - Clarity of prose
 - References/citations of reliable/verifiable sources
 - Neutrality (no personal opinions)
 - Layout/images/summary box
- Take a look at an article’s ‘Talk’ pages (including whether it has been flagged for particular issues e.g. lack of neutrality, insufficient citations)
- View a page’s history – including ‘compare selected revisions’

How can researchers contribute to Wikipedia?

- No original research!
- All statements should be supported by references to reliable sources; if no reliable source can be found, Wikipedia should not have an article on it.
- Articles should represent a neutral point of view.
- Aside from creating new articles/rewriting existing ones, some 'quick fixes' to help improve a page:
 - Adding bibliography/citations
 - Inserting Wikilinks to connect an article to other pages, or adding categories
 - Uploading photographs you have taken