Homework 8 Write-Up

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Part 1

This website is a tool for browsing Wikipedia articles in parallel and seeing the links between them. As you browse over time, you develop trails of articles that show your history and the transitions between subjects. This is interesting because it helps make visible your browsing history in a way that is helpful to you—it reveals areas where you have yet to explore and clarifies the trail of articles that got you to a certain page. It is built for people that frequent Wikipedia and use it for light research purposes; generally exploring a series of linked articles from one or two main ones.

Part 2

- Search for a Wikipedia page (home page)
    - o Input search text on the home page
    - o Click the relevant Wikipedia page suggested by the site for the search query
- Browse through the article (trail page)
    - o Scroll down to read through the article
- Go to another Wikipedia page (trail page)
    - o Click on a link in one of the articles' text to open that article and see the link
- Change each page's size (trail page)
    - o Click on the expand button at the top of the page to expand the page's height
    - o Click again to shrink the page's height down
- Remove a page from the trail (trail page)
    - o Click the "x" button at the top right of the page to remove the page from the trail
- Move around the trail of pages if there are enough to go off the screen (trail page)
    - o Click the left and right arrows on either side of the screen to automatically scroll
    - o Use the horizontal scroll bar to scroll side to side

Part 3

Wikipedia API

- Chosen because it delivers the HTML of any Wikipedia page easily and allows for querying all pages based on a search term.
- Used to get suggestions of Wikipedia pages based on a search and load each page that is clicked from the body content.
- Provides all the content for the website.

React JS

- Chosen because it would make creating multiple instances of the same UI components easier (such as the pages created each time a link is clicked). Also chosen because I wanted to learn more about React and get practice using it.
- Used it to simplify the code used to render the prototype and maintain the state of the "trail" of pages, which is recursive. Also made it easier to re-render select parts of the trail as pages are added and closed.
- Does not add much to the interface, mainly a way of maintaining state and making the development process simpler.

Part 4

Main changes made to the mockups are cosmetic: better defining the page component with a border, removing the visual clutter from having multiple connections for each link. Otherwise the mockups are the same as the final interface.

Part 5

The biggest challenge for me was creating an object to store the state of the trail. Since each page could have many links, and each of those pages could have many links, I decided to make a structure that is recursive. This meant somewhat complicated add and remove functions but enables the trail to be of any size or complexity, with potentially many links between pages at different levels.