

Danger signs

Check for warning signs, or 'template' messages at the top of the article or section, within an article, and in the 'discussion' tab (or 'talk page'), e.g.



The factual accuracy of this article is disputed.

Please see the relevant discussion on the [talk page](#).

Good articles include a reference list attributing quotations to reliable sources. Check for any warnings about inadequate referencing, e.g.



This article does not cite any references or sources.

Please help [improve this article](#) by adding citations to [reliable sources](#).

Unverifiable material may be challenged and removed.



This article or section may contain inappropriate or misinterpreted citations that do not verify the text.

Please help [improve this article](#) by checking for inaccuracies. ([help](#), [talk](#), [get involved!](#))

There may also be warning messages within an article, e.g.

[\[citation needed\]](#) [\[verification needed\]](#) [\[unreliable source?\]](#) [\[not in citation given\]](#) [\[original research?\]](#)

Check for warnings that an article may be biased:



The neutrality of this section is disputed.

Please see the discussion on the [talk page](#).

Please do not remove this message until the dispute is resolved.

Text: [\[opinion needs balancing\]](#) [\[neutrality disputed\]](#)

Check for disputes on the discussion or talk pages:



There is a dispute about this section and an editor has requested a third opinion.

If you would like to contribute to the discussion, please see the [talk page](#).


Check the 'history' tab for evidence of vandalism, e.g. ('*remove vandalism*' or '*rvv vandalism*')

[article](#) [discussion](#) [view source](#) [history](#)

Check the **history tab** for evidence of vandalism or editing wars






Also, check for a history of 'editing wars' between two or more editors repeatedly undoing each other's edits, e.g. ('*revert*' or '*rvv*')

Good Articles



A small green cross  within a circle in the discussion tab indicates a **Good Article**.



Good articles have no obvious problems, are approaching the quality of a professional encyclopedia, and meet the good article criteria:

-  **well written** (following style guidelines)
-  **broad** (in scope)
-  **factually accurate**
-  **neutral** (unbiased and fair)
-  **stable** (not subject to editing wars)

However, the page you are viewing may have changed since it was judged a "Good Article". It may have been vandalised:

-  Deleting accurate information
-  Inserting false information

[article](#) [discussion](#) [edit this page](#) [history](#)

Open the **history tab** to view an earlier version of the article

You can easily view earlier versions of the page by going to the 'history' tab and selecting a date and time (you can also compare any previous version of the page to the current version).

This is an [old revision](#) of this page, as edited by ... at... It may differ significantly from [the current revision](#).

If you have a Wikipedia account, you can revert or rollback the page to restore it to the earlier version.








Former Good Articles are those that no longer meet the Good Article criteria.

Featured Articles

A small bronze star  in the **top right corner** indicates a **Featured Article**.



Featured articles support their claims with specific evidence and external citations in a **reference list** or **bibliography**. These articles have been reviewed by Wikipedia's editors and were found to meet the featured article criteria:

-  **professionally written**
-  **comprehensive** (in scope)
-  **factually accurate**
-  **neutral** (unbiased and fair)
-  **stable** (not subject to editing wars)

The **discussion** tab includes further information:



Remember that even Featured Articles can quickly change (or be vandalised), so always verify the information against a reputable source.



Former Featured Articles are those that no longer meet the Featured Article criteria.



Wikipedia: Academic Use

Wikipedia (like any encyclopedia), is a great **starting point** for research, helping you to:

- Get a general understanding of a topic.
- Identify keywords and search terms.
- Gather bibliographic references to locate other sources of information.

But it should **not** be cited as a source in itself. Use the reference lists in the Wikipedia article to:

- Find a reputable source that you can cite.
- Locate (and read) the cited reference sources to check whether they really:
 - a) exist; and
 - b) support the article.

Remember, Wikipedia (like any encyclopedia) is only a **starting point**, and should **not** be the only source that you consult for information. Unlike traditional encyclopedias:

- Wikipedia is a wiki, which means that **anyone can edit** or **vandalise** an article.

Use your judgement. Remember that all sources have to be evaluated. The quality of Wikipedia content varies. Wikipedia has a colour-coded quality rating scale to help you evaluate an article:

★ FA	Featured Articles
A	A-Class Articles
⊕ GA	Good Articles
B	B-Class Articles
C	C-Class Articles
Start	Start-Class Articles
Stub	Stub-Class Articles

[article](#)
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Open the discussion tab to check the quality rating of an article

This article has been **rated** as **B-Class** on the Project's [quality scale](#).
 (If you rated the article please give a short summary at [comments](#) to explain the ratings and/or to identify the strengths and weaknesses.)



This handout in a nutshell

You should not use only Wikipedia for your research. Wikipedia is a great starting point, but there are a number of good reasons why you shouldn't cite it in your bibliography:

- Wikipedia is an encyclopedia
- Wiki content can be modified at any time

Instead, you can use Wikipedia to:

- Get a basic understanding of a topic
- Identify more keywords and search terms
- Find additional sources of information on your topic (reliable sources that you *can* cite in your bibliography or reference list).

Further Reading:

Wikipedia includes more information about:

- Wikipedia:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:About>
- Researching with Wikipedia
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Researching_with_Wikipedia
- Wikipedia's Assessment Criteria:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:ASSESS>
- Good Articles in Wikipedia:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:GA>
- Featured Articles in Wikipedia:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:FA>

More guides on evaluating Wikipedia articles:

- How to evaluate a Wikipedia article:
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/1/16/How_to_evaluate_a_Wikipedia_article.pdf
- Cumbrowski, Carsten. "Wikipedia Article Quality Assessment and Ranking Tips for Users and Search Engine Engineers." *Search Engine Journal* (22 Nov. 2007).
<http://www.searchenginejournal.com>

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WHY NOT WIKIPEDIA?

The Library Guide to The Free Encyclopedia

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library.otago.ac.nz

