

Essay #4: Wikipedia Contribution

The Assignment: Choose an entry on Wikipedia.com to revise, or create a new entry, based on research you've done on the discourse of your major field. This "essay" will be written in the style of a Wikipedia.com entry, and will be posted to the site by the final draft due date. This is your first attempt into becoming a member of this community, by contributing to information about it.

Rough Draft Due: 10/29

Final Draft Due: 11/7

Remember: Make your past research work for you—I want you to rely on your past research in Essay #3, or past research you've done in other courses, to inform how and what you write in this assignment. You will likely be able to use any of the sources you found for Essay #3 to support the entry you write here.

Choosing an Entry: You have two choices: (1) Choose an existing entry to edit or lengthen, or (2) write a new entry on something not yet covered by Wikipedia.com. Neither of these choices are necessarily more time-consuming than the other. When you're choosing an entry, look back at the research you did for Essay #3 to get ideas for key terms and people.

Don't Forget: In class we'll talk about Wikipedia's discourse community and how to write an entry in that style. Remember to be conscious of the formatting, organization, and source citation format that Wikipedia uses—it is likely very different from what you've done before for essays.

Also, make use of the entry's discussion page (where users go to talk about what they have changed or what should be changed) as well as the history page (which chronicles the changes made over time to the entry). Both of these functions can give you great ideas for where to go next with the entry's revision.

Since Wikipedia is online, it makes great use of hypertext, or linked words and phrases that either go to other Wikipedia entries or to other internet sites. Be sure to use this cross-referencing tool, as it is really what has made Wikipedia so helpful to users. If you have questions about how to add hypertext links, ask me. We'll review how to work with Wikipedia in class.

General Requirements:

- ◇ Revise an entry (or write a new entry) that relates to your research area for Essay #3
- ◇ No page requirement, but general effort equivalent of a usual 3-4 page essay. Think about the research that is necessary for that kind of essay, and the effort needed to write that kind of essay, and then put forth that same effort into this entry—even though likely this entry will be much shorter than 3-4 pages of double-spaced text
- ◇ Follow Wikipedia's formatting guidelines and style (we'll be talking about this in class)

- ◇ Use hyperlinks as much as you can to both cross-reference to other entries and link to internet sites
- ◇ Cite 3-5 sources, some (or all) of which can be from your Essay #3

Turning it In: Turn in the rough draft digitally, like usual. The rough draft can include further notes for revision, along with the original entry, or it can be a fully revised/written entry. For the final draft, post it to Wikipedia.com by the due date, and send me the URL so I can check it out. No hard copies are needed for the final draft.

Questions? Ask me. Otherwise, happy writing!