# Learner Guide **** Section 2

Evaluating Wikipedia with a critical eye

*This is the second week of the course Wikipedia + Libraries: Better Together!*

This week we’re examining the policies and practices that impact article development on Wikipedia. You’ll gain crucial tools you need as library staff to usefully evaluate Wikipedia articles. Use this learning guide as a work- sheet to support your experience for the second section of the course.

Topics for the week include:

* How Wikipedia’s community of editors navigate notability and conflicts of interest
* Defining quality article: neutral point-of-view, verifiability, no original research
* Assessing rigor, quality and authority of Wikipedia articles
* Guest presenter
* Using Wikipedia for personal and scholastic research

### Pre-work (before the next live session):

* Complete [Evaluating Articles and Sources,](https://outreachdashboard.wmflabs.org/training/editing-wikipedia/evaluating-articles) a 26-minute self-paced tutorial that will introduce you to ways you can evaluate the level of development of Wikipedia articles and make improvements
* Knowing Wikipedia’s inner workings will help you assess reliability. Review this [Evaluating Wikipedia](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Editing_Wikipedia_brochure_EN.pdf) brochure and use the key below to identify “signs of reliability” and “signs to look closer” in articles.



**Signs of reliability**

\*Featured article (FA) or “A” grade articles are excellent, professional quality, reliable

**Signs to look closer**

\*Good article—well done, approaching profes-

sional quality, reliable

\*“B” and “C” grade articles are mostly complete

and without problems, pay closer attention to “C”

Article page templates with warnings (“citations needed”

or “inadequate lead”) can help you see weaknesses

Page locks—Unverified editors are blocked; locks

reduce likelihood of misinformation or vandalism

\*Stub and start class articles need develop-

ment; they are ungraded and range from very

short but verifiable to long and very unrelia- ble; look closely to determine quality

Templates on Talk pages stating editors are monitored

means the page is under watch; monitoring reduces likelihood of misinformation or vandalism

Tip:

\*Verify the currency of a dated template by compar- ing versions using History. Articles may be improved, but warning templates are not always removed.

# Live Session TWO

* [Date and Time]

Think of a topic relevant to your communi- ty that you believe would be suitable for a Wikipedia article. Explain how this topic meets Wikipedia’s encyclopedic definition of notability.

Use this guide as a companion to the live session and

discussion board assignments to scaffold your learning.

## Notability

If a topic has received significant coverage in [reliable](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Identifying_reliable_sources)

[sources](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Identifying_reliable_sources) that are [independent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Independent_sources) of the subject, it is presumed to be suitable for a stand-alone article.

## Defining and Assessing Article Quality

### Wikipedians assess articles using grades: [Featured](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Featured_article_criteria), “A,” and “Good” articles meet [content policies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:List_of_policies#CONPOL) and demonstrate high quality. But half of English Wikipedia’s articles have not been assessed or are under development. Confidently assess articles at any stage of development using this criteria:

1. [Assessment class](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_assessment)—Articles graded B, Good, A, or FA

are generally reliable; Cs are mostly complete; ungrad- ed stubs & starters need evaluation

1. Stability—Look for stability over time; articles with multiple editors have increased likelihood of NPOV
2. Templates—Templates signal an article’s weaknesses; check dates and compare historical versions
3. Breadth—Well-organized, comprehensive in cover- age; read and evaluate language quality for NPOV

and NOR, look to talk pages for debates or warnings

1. Reference quality—Evaluate the range, verifiability and authority of references
2. Contributor authority—Look to user history and profiles for insight

How can you apply what you’ve learned about assessing reliability in Wikipedia articles to help others with

personal or scholastic research?

### Assignments

1. Read any two of these five articles and post a review for each in the relevant thread in your online discussion forum group:
   1. Assess the reliability and usefulness of each article for an information seeker based on what you've learned about the six ways to assess Wikipedia articles.
   2. Suggest ways to improve the articles so they satisfy Wikipedia’s core content principles (neutral point of view, verifiability, and no original research) and better expand access to the world of infor- mation for Wikipedia’s readers.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tillicum_Village>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infectious_mononucleosis>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeremy_Meeks>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infant_sleep_training>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane_Harvey>

Discussion guidelines:

Complete this assignment after the live session. Be sure to read the other reviews and reply to your colleagues in order to deepen your understanding. We will be monitoring your discussion and responding to questions.

### Further reading and exploration (entirely optional)

* [Evaluating Wikipedia—](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/52/Evaluating_Wikipedia_brochure.pdf)Brochure published by the Wikimedia Foundation
* [DeletedWiki—](https://twitter.com/DeletedWiki)a Twitter bot that posts the titles of rejected article from English Wikipedia
* [“Discovery Happens Here: PW Talks with Wikipedia's Jake Orlowitz”—](https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/libraries/article/74785-discovery-happens-here-pw-talks-with-wikipedia-s-jake-orlowitz.html) an Publisher’s Weekly interview with The Wik- ipedia Library’s founder Jake Orlowitz on Wikipedia and libraries
* [“Writing Wikipedia Articles Teaches Information Literacy”](https://blog.wikimedia.org/2017/06/19/wikipedia-information-literacy-study/) — a blog post summarizing a mixed-methods study of Wik- ipedia editing in higher education coursework; link to the study from the post

### Next week: Contribute to the body of knowledge

We’ll look at the basics of editing in Wikipedia, go over advanced editing topics, learn about channels to connect with others in the community, and highlight important things to know about conflicts of interest for libraries.

The next live session will be [Date and time].

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