

WRITING DIVERSITY BACK INTO HISTORY

A WIKIPEDIA HOW-TO

THANK YOU for taking the time to read through this kit. We hope that once you've read it, you'll be inspired to join us in fighting the systemic bias in Wikipedia and to help write people back into history!

We would love to hear from you:

Please tell us what you think about the kit by posting comments, questions or suggestions at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia_talk:WikiProject_Countering_systemic_bias

Don't forget to post your outcomes from using the kit at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Systemic_bias_kit

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CHECKLIST AND TIMELINE

6 WEEKS

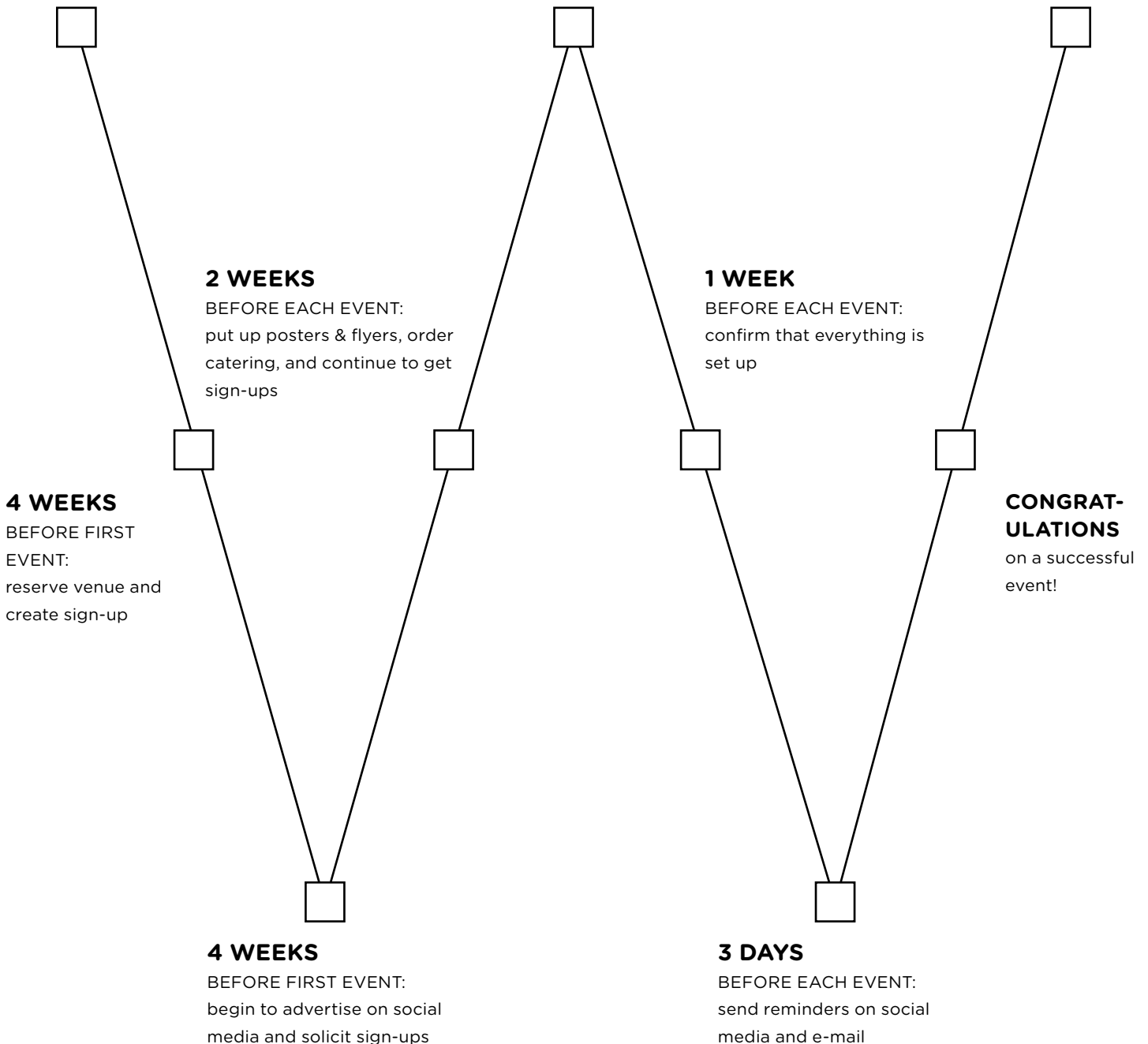
BEFORE FIRST EVENT:
submit grant request

2 WEEKS

BEFORE FIRST EVENT:
talk to reference librarians
and start compiling worklist

1 DAY

AFTER EACH
EVENT:
start thinking about
the next event!



OBTAINING FUNDING

PROJECTS AND EVENTS GRANTS

OBTAINING FUNDING is the first step to having a successful series of systemic bias workshops. If you already have funding from a non-Wikimedia Foundation source, then go ahead and skip this section. If not, read on!

Creating a Project and Events Grant application is a little bit confusing. If you need an example, check out the pilot grant application and other resources here:

https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Grants:PEG/Keilana/Loyola_Women_in_Science_and_Math_Workshop

https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Grants:PEG/Program_Resources/Edit-a-thons

STEPS

1. The first thing you need to do is go to https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Grants:PEG/Submit_request and create a title for your request. For our pilot, it was called “Loyola Women In Science and Math Workshops”. There are several sections of the form to fill out.
2. The first section includes a start and end date – pick a start date a couple of weeks before your first workshop so that you can have the money ahead of time. Pick an end date after your last workshop by a week or two.
3. Then, write a two sentence description of your project. Say how many workshops you will be running, at what institution they will be held, when they will be held, and the subject of your workshops.
4. You also need to write a project goal. State that you are using this kit to combat systemic bias on Wikipedia and that you are encouraging people at your institution (whatever demographic they may be) to join the Wikipedia community.
5. In the next subsection, state your goals and measures for success. We have found in the pilot program that regular attendance is 7-10 people, around 3-5 are repeat attendees, and that almost everyone creates a new article. If you want to accomplish something different (e.g. create these 10 articles, get 20 people to attend, expand these 15 articles), then state those. These goals should be specific to you and your plans for the workshops.

6. In the “Project Scope and Activities” section, you need to describe a very brief plan for what will happen if and when you get a grant. If you’re working with another organization or already have something secured, this is the place to let the grant making team know. Also, this is a good place to briefly justify what you are asking for – e.g. you are buying food to entice college students or asking for Wikimedia merchandise to give away.

7. The resources section is going to be fairly unique to you. State that you are using this kit but fill in some of your own experience and unique qualities.

8. If there is a WikiProject that focuses on the subject you are writing about, leave them a message and see if they are willing to support your efforts.

9. Talk about how you will be meeting the objectives of participation and quality, because you will be creating new editors and teaching them to create quality content. See the pilot application for an example, but tailor your text to your specific focus. Your project will benefit whichever language Wikipedia you choose to work on, will impact editor retention and quality initiatives, and is already being replicated!

Congratulations!

10. Click “save”, e-mail grants@wikimedia.org, and wait to hear back from them. It should take a couple of weeks – keep an eye on the talk page of your request because they may have questions for you.

11. If they have questions, just answer them the best you can. The grant-making committee is not trying to trip you up or deny you funding, they just want to know more about your project!

TIPS

***** *We have found that somewhere between \$100 and \$150 USD is plenty to buy catering for a workshop. Look at some popular local restaurants and estimate a cost to make sure. If you need to pay venue fees, this will obviously be more.*

***** *Make sure you include your specific goal – e.g. “We will be teaching attendees to write biographies of historical African leaders to combat systemic bias on Wikipedia.”*

- * *You detail what you will be spending money on in the Budget section – the table is fairly self-explanatory and you just have to fill in the details of what you are asking for. You can either ask for money to buy merchandise (if it's not Wikipedia merchandise) or ask for Wikimedia merchandise in the “Non-financial requirements” section.*
- * *The “Impact” section is the most difficult to fill out. In it, you have to discuss the impact that your workshops will be having on the Wikipedia community and it requires a little more detail and writing than the other sections.*

Fun Fact!

Wikipedia has an official theme song called “Hotel Wikipedia,” **a parody of The Eagles’ “Hotel California.”**

SIGN UP SHEET

QUESTIONS TO ASK

YOU CAN SEE the original pilot survey here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1CmvzHlnSSM5SGJQtrDSIVgNFVrXxBNf4kyH5jhLMEYc/edit>. The questions you should ask are somewhat dependent on your institution, but the most important one is obviously getting people to sign up for specific dates.

- * Pick your dates ahead of time. We have found that a mix of Saturdays and Sundays is best for colleges, though weeknights may work better for non-student oriented environments.
- * Build your survey and include relevant questions, especially an e-mail address.
- * Send a reminder e-mail before each event. You can even ask for preferences on workshop subjects or catering!
- * We recommend using Google Docs because it is easy to set up, the data is very easy to organize, and it can be shared between all organizers.

ADVERTISING

IF YOU BUILD IT, NO ONE COMES

ADVERTISING is critical to attracting participants for these types of workshops! We have included a sample poster in the appendix, which is a good starting point.

STEPS

1. After deciding on your theme and your dates, make posters and your sign up sheet. They don't have to be anything fancy!
2. We recommend putting posters in highly-trafficked areas, e-mailing copies to relevant departments or groups, and distributing them throughout any buildings in your institution that you can.
3. Start to advertise on social media and distribute your survey in networks that relate to your theme or general networks at your institution. Most participants will come through these calls to action, so don't skimp or hesitate out of fear of being "annoying". You want to be noticed.
4. The next important part of advertising is e-mailing. Any people who sign up or have attended should get a friendly reminder that the next event is coming up, with a specific call to action and a link to the sign-up survey.

TIPS

- * *There are several motivations that we have found in our surveying that you may want to emphasize in your advertising: free food, learning about little-known people, free merchandise, and social justice.*

FEEDING YOUR PARTICIPANTS

CATERING TIPS AND TRICKS

STEPS

1. Look at local restaurants and caterers (possibly using suggestions from people who have signed up) to find a good option.
2. Order the food at least a few days in advance, and schedule it to arrive at the time your workshop starts.

TIPS

- * *For your first workshop, it's better to err on the side of a bit too much food than to little. You can always give leftovers to participants, especially if they're college students. They tend to appreciate free food of any kind.*
- * *You can use your sign-up sheet to estimate how many people will show up; we have found that about half of the people who sign up end up coming. Otherwise, think of a popular restaurant near your institution and see if they do catering.*
- * *Remember to save your receipts so your grant reporting goes smoothly!*

RESOURCES

LIBRARIANS ARE YOUR FRIENDS!

SINCE EACH SET of workshops is unique, we don't have advice for specific resources, nor the knowledge about each subfield you may be working in. Having resources at your event is incredibly important! Every Wikipedia article must be backed up by reliable sources, preferably academic sources. Biographical dictionaries or specialist encyclopedias are great places to start, and some, like the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, are even online. Long biographies of one person tend to be intimidating for new editors, so try sticking to shorter sources for the most part.

STEPS

- 1.** Head over to your local university library or public library and ask to speak to a reference librarian. He or she will help you secure the resources you need and will be able to point you to online references along with books that you can bring to your event.
- 2.** If you don't have access to a lot of books, there are lots on Google Books and plenty of free resources available on the Internet! You can also ask at a relevant WikiProject for help in finding resources. People are usually very friendly and willing to help.
- 3.** Once you have your resources you need to start creating your own version of what we call The List. It can be as long or as short as you like – see our very long version at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WP:WSL>. You need to include a wikilink to the subject, a 1-2 word description of them, and either a link to an online resource or the book they can be found in.

TIPS

- * *We recommend gathering resources at least a week in advance to make sure you have everything.*

- * *If some books you want to use are reference-only and you are not holding your event in the library, ask the librarian if you can make a special arrangement. They are usually quite happy to help you out! Just make sure communications with librarians are very good and there are no misunderstandings – we have run into many a snag with this.*
- * *We have found that a longer List is better because it allows participants to have a wide range of choices and will be more likely to find a “perfect fit” article. This is the most time-consuming part of the workshops – if you let it be – so only put in as much time as you want to.*

Fun Fact!

There’s a guessing pool to hypothesize which Wikipedia article will be **the last one to ever be edited.**

WORKSHOP FLOW

HERE'S AN OUTLINE of how the average event will go on the day of. Modify it as you need – every group and every institution has unique needs. Also, please let us know what you modified and how it worked for you!

STEPS

- 1.** You and whoever is helping you (you need someone to help you!) should arrive at the venue at least 30 minutes before.
- 2.** Go to the library and pick up your books, any technology you need, and any last-minute supplies.
- 3.** Set up your room the way you like it – we prefer to have people at tables if possible so they can collaborate! Be sure to keep the books away from the food so the librarians continue to like you.
- 4.** You may want to put on some music – quiet can get a little awkward!
- 5.** Wait for people to arrive! When they come in, tell them to get merch and food and get settled.

When people are settled, sit down with them and run them through the basics. Help them pick a biography and get started, then check on them fairly regularly. The two main things you need to walk them through are formatting (especially references) and copyright. Show them how to appropriately paraphrase and make sure to emphasize the high standard of Wikipedia towards copyright.
- 7.** Be sure to have people take your survey before they leave so that you can have their e-mail address and all of the lovely data about them! Thank everyone for coming.

TIPS

- * *Shoot for around 7-10 people per event. There's a common misconception that successful events have lots of attendees, but we have found that smaller events allow for more positive social interaction and makes the participants more productive.*
- * *Don't panic if no one shows up in the first couple of hours, or at all. Some days are awful for everybody for no apparent reason. However, you can mitigate this effect by asking around and seeing which days are particularly busy for people, with exams or big events in your city.*

Fun Fact!

There are 65,000 articles in the 15th edition of Encyclopedia Britannica.

Wikipedia has 4.3 million English articles.

HANDLING CHALLENGES

WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

IN ORDER FOR your content to improve Wikipedia, it must meet the Notability policy and Verifiability policy, available at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WP:N> and <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WP:V>. If it doesn't meet the requirements it may be deleted.

- * Make sure that every subject on your list meets the requirements for notability, and make sure that your participants articulate why your subject is notable in each article, preferably in the first or second sentence of the article, as in the example.
- * If your content gets challenged, be calm and reasonable and explain concisely why your content meets policy.
- * Biographies that fall under this umbrella tend to be challenged because they “didn’t do anything important”, so make sure you explain what they did for their field and why they are important and point to your sources to show others that they are represented in the literature.
- * Make sure that your participants aren’t plagiarizing, and if they are, work quickly to correct the problem. Wikipedia takes copyright laws very seriously.

WHAT NOW?

SURVEYING YOUR PARTICIPANTS & FEEDBACK

SURVEYING your participants is incredibly important to help figure out what works at your institution and what doesn't! You can, again, use Google Docs to set up a survey and have a dedicated tablet or other device at your event for surveying before the participants leave. This ensures that you get every participant to complete the survey.

WE ASK FOR

- * A Wikipedia username
- * Whether or not the account was created that day
- * What articles they worked on during the workshop
- * What they enjoyed and what they didn't enjoy
- * What they had difficulty with
- * How they heard about the workshop
- * What motivated them to attend

We make it clear that the survey is their entry ticket to a merchandise raffle and have had 10% participation in the surveys since. Feel free to add your own survey data! Since this kit is designed to perpetually evolve, we want to hear your feedback and see what you and your participants thought! Contact me at keilanawiki@gmail.com, and if you let me know you are using it, expect to receive a survey about your experience and feedback. Thank you!

REPETITION

HOST MONTHLY WORKSHOPS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

THE GOAL FOR THIS KIT is to make workshops a regular fixture at many universities and not just a one-off event. The key to teaching editors effectively and retaining them is to have regular workshops. One-off events do not work in any way to create a sustainable group of editors. Women especially need an invitation and a regular scheduled time to edit in order to become invested in the project. At Loyola, we held twice-monthly workshops designed around the academic calendar. From our experiments, workshops need to be held at least once a month (preferably twice a month) to be effective at all.

After laying the groundwork, all you should have to do for each event is order catering and send reminder e-mails. Consider enlisting a junior member of your organization or a younger person to help and be able to carry out workshops after you move on.

APPENDIX

INCLUDES

- * Sample handout
- * Article formatting guide
- * Example flyer

Of course, if this doesn't work for you, feel free to change it up and let us know why it didn't work.

Add some specifics about the type of article you are trying to write to the second part of the handout, as it is written very generally. There are also slots where you can put in your own links to your list of potential subjects. Make it yours!

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