

# wikipedia in class

Teachers  
Guide



WIKIPEDIA  
The Free Encyclopedia



WIKIMEDIA  
ישראל



# Wikipedia In Class Teacher's Guide



Wikimedia Israel is a recognized chapter of the international Wikimedia Foundation and shares its mission to promote open knowledge and education through the collection, development and distribution of content, and to provide such content to the public free of charge. WMIL activity focuses on developing the initiatives of the Wikimedia Foundation in Israel, namely Hebrew and Arabic Wikipedia, which are all dedicated to collaboratively creating and preserving shared knowledge for any purpose with easy access for all. <http://www.wikimedia.org.il/>

**“Imagine a world in  
which every single  
person on the planet  
is given free access to  
the sum of all human  
knowledge. That’s  
what we’re doing.”**

*Jimmy Wales, Wikipedia Founder.*

*Dear teachers,*

It is no secret – today's students broadly use Wikipedia on a daily basis. A survey conducted in 2014 determined that 84% of the Israelis trust Wikipedia, and about 54% of teenagers use Wikipedia for academic study\*

Thanks to its power and influence, Wikipedia can provide powerful leverage for promoting academic and educational goals. Wikimedia Israel encourages the use of Wikipedia as a tool enabling significant learning, and believes in students' ability to contribute to the online encyclopedia and enrich it.

In recent years, thousands of students in academic institutes, in Israel and abroad, have experienced Wikipedia assignments that nurture skills of academic writing, critical reading, cooperative work, research and various technological skills.

We invite you to take part in the information revolution and let Wikipedia into class, through the front door.

In this booklet you will find a list of skills and qualifications that may be developed and encouraged by writing in Wikipedia and a broad variety of "Wikipedian" activities that you can implement in class.

We hope you find this booklet helpful. We would be happy to assist you in your work.

**Good luck and enjoy,  
Wikimedia Israel**

The materials in this booklet were assembled and edited by Shai Katz, Instruction and Education Coordinator, Wikimedia Israel.

\*Survey performed by Panels Research Institute, through the online responders' panel, panel4all, June 2014.



# What will my students gain from Wikipedian activities?

Thousands of education professionals using Wikipedia in their work testify that Wikipedia is a highly effective platform for significant learning. They say that Wikipedia's educational and academic strength originates, to a great extent, from the extraordinary variety of important skills and qualifications it can be used to develop.

## **1 Reading skills and information evaluation strategies**

**a.** Getting to know how information is formed (including how disagreements are formed, the existence of various perspectives, and the political and commercial aspects of information).

**b.** Learning of parameters for information evaluation: balance and neutrality, comprehensive writing, establishing on facts, using reliable sources, etc.

**c.** Getting acquainted with different genres of writing.

## **2 Digital literacy**

**a.** Working in a digital environment.

**b.** Processing and creating digital information.

**c.** Cooperation and communication management by digital means.

## **3 International qualifications**

**a.** Reading in multiple languages.

**b.** Translation skills.

**c.** Multicultural perspective.

## **4 Interdisciplinary thinking**

Understanding the connections between different disciplines.

## **5 Independent, active, creative and productive learning**

**a.** Formulating study plans.

**b.** Producing a valuable and publicly visible product.

**c.** Self-management.

**d.** Developing personal responsibility.

# **Skills and qualifications which Wikipedia develops**

Above are ten main skills and qualifications you can nurture amongst your students using Wikipedia. The list was compiled based on the extensive experience accrued in Wikimedia Israel, and worldwide.



## **Active citizenship and connection with communities**

- a.** Learning from people in the community.
- b.** Studying contents related to the living environment of the students.
- c.** Forming connections with culture institutions and libraries.
- d.** Integrating into the activities of a virtual community.
- e.** Creating a piece of information which serves the local community and also contributes to the biggest pool of free knowledge.
- f.** Active participation in a multi-dimensional public project.
- g.** Exposure to values such as Knowledge Sharing and Free Knowledge.

## **Study skills**

- a.** Identifying problems.
- b.** Formulating questions.
- c.** Locating information sources.
- d.** Formulating hypotheses and interpretations.
- e.** Reaching conclusions.
- f.** Critical thinking.

## **Writing skills**

- a.** Proper writing: grammar, register selection, wording, spelling.
- b.** Integrative, concise and factual writing.
- c.** Relying on sources.

## **Cooperative learning and teamwork** (for activities performed in teams)

- a.** Cooperation for producing a product.
- b.** Interpersonal communication.
- c.** Giving and receiving feedback.
- d.** Leading and leadership.

As result of the all of the above: **strengthening self-efficacy.**

**A Variety of  
Wikipedian  
Activities**

**OR:**

**What Can I  
Actually Do  
With My  
Students?**

**Below are two clusters of academic activities that include the use of Wikipedia: one cluster of browsing the web, reading and performing information analysis activities, and another cluster of activities revolving creating content. The activities in the clusters can be performed by individuals, teams, and even entire classes working and cooperating together. Most activities can be assigned for any discipline you or your students find interesting.**

# 1

## **First activities cluster:**

surfing,  
reading and  
information  
analysis

### **Activity no. 1:**

#### **Comparing articles in different languages\***

- a.** Choose subjects from the curriculum, with regards to which different cultures hold different perceptions.
- b.** Ask the students to compare articles written on these subjects, in their native language and in other languages Wikipedias.
- c.** Have students formulate hypotheses with respect to the origin of the differences, and discuss their meaning.

#### **\*Examples:**

Compare the article "Tea" in the Hebrew/English Wikipedia with the article "茶" in the Japanese Wikipedia.

\* This model was presented by Mr. Amir Gosrky, teacher and history coordinator from the Harishonim School, Hertzliya Israel, in the convention "Behind Wikipedia's Transparent Screen" that took place on March 15, 2015, and was led by CET, the Ministry of Education's Pedagogic Secretariat and Wikimedia Israel.

**First  
activities  
cluster:**

surfing,  
reading and  
information  
analysis

**Activity no. 2:  
Critical comparison between articles  
in different subjects**

The activity clarifies the importance of critical evaluation of texts, and provides basic tools for such evaluation. Choose different articles from Wikipedia that link to the curriculum, and ask the students to compare their different aspects: level of detail, interest, linguistic appropriateness, neutrality, etc.

**\*Examples:**

Compare the articles “nuclear fuel” and “solar energy”.

**Activity no. 3:  
Critical comparison between Wikipedia and other  
information sources**

Choose articles from Wikipedia, and ask the students to compare them with other information sources: textbooks, articles in printed encyclopedias, blogs, commercial organizations’ websites, government organizations’ websites, etc.

**\*Examples:**

Compare different information sources on global heritage sites: Wikipedia, UNESCO site and other sources.

Compare different information sources on human rights: Wikipedia, Amnesty International website and the UN website.

**Activity no. 4:**  
**Talk pages analysis** Wikipedia articles have talk pages, used for discussions about them.  
To reach the talk page of a certain Wikipedia article, choose the “talk” tab in the tabs row at the top of the article.

- a.** Choose articles on disputed subjects.
- b.** Ask the students to read the talk pages for these articles and analyze the disputes in them: which arguments are brought up by each party? Are the arguments convincing? And so forth.
- c.** You can conclude the activity by writing essays or holding a debate in class.

**\* Examples:**

Analyzing the talk pages for the following articles:

*Animal testing.*

*Bitcoin* (a computer-based, decentralized coin).

**Activity no. 5:**

**Evaluating articles' reliability**

- a.** Choose articles from Wikipedia in subjects from the curriculum.
- b.** Ask the students to assess the reliability of the articles by crossing their content with other information sources, and by using Wikipedia's internal tools: previous versions of articles, talk pages used for discussion on them, and footnotes on the bottom.

\*To see the talk page or earlier versions of a certain Wikipedia article, use the tabs row at the top of the article (note that not every Wikipedia article has an active talk page).

\*To see the footnotes included in a certain Wikipedia article, scroll down to the bottom of the article page. (Note that not every Wikipedia article has footnotes.)

\*To see highly reliable articles, you can use the list of featured articles in Wikipedia.

## First activities cluster:

surfing,  
reading and  
information  
analysis

## Activity no. 6: Wikirace

- a. Choose two articles (according to your goals, you can focus on two subjects from the curriculum, or choose any other articles).
- b. Define the first article as the starting article, and the second article as the destination article.
- c. Ask the students to arrive from the starting article to the destination article by passing through intermediary articles.
- d. Passing between articles is conducted by the internal links on the body of each article.
- e. The winner will be the one arriving from the starting article to the destination article through as few as possible intermediary articles.
- f. At the end of the game, you can review alternative paths that may be long and winding but especially creative.

### Comments:

The game can be applied to every two Wikipedia articles, for which the “road” from the first to the other is not short and trivial, or alternatively, too long and winding.

**We recommend** using the game application: *NaraView*\*. The application is easy to operate, and enables visual presentation of the students’ activity in real time, and additional activity stages that enable enhancing the study process. You can use the application through the website:

<http://naraview.wix.com/nara>.

**For those holding the activity without the application:** you can use the file “Wikipedia race” that enables students to record their work stages. To see the file, enter in Wikipedia's search line: “Wikipedia:wikirace”).

\* The application was jointly developed by teachers Maya Ben Amotz and Guy Bresler, with the support of the MindCet center, in the framework of the Center's Fellowship Program.

**Activity no. 7:**  
**Investigating portals and categories (preface activity**  
**for presenting a new study subject)**

Most Wikipedia articles are grouped according to subject. These groups are the portal pages and subject categories.

- a. Enter a portal or category in Wikipedia.
- b. Ask the students the following questions:
  - What article subjects are you familiar with?
  - What article subjects would you like to know more about?
  - What issues do you expect to learn about in the classroom?
  - Are there terms that you expected to find and do not appear in a portal or category?

# 2

## Second activities cluster:

Active Content Creation

**The activities included in this cluster allow the students to generate actual products and become active participants in editing Wikipedia.**

**For supporting the students in these activities, you need to be familiar with Wikipedia editing and the conduct of the online community of Wikipedia volunteers.**

### Activity no. 1:

#### **Adding image to articles - photos, videos or illustrations**

Choose subjects from the curriculum, and ask the students to add different visual content for them: A picture illustrating the subject of the article (if possible, you should encourage them to take pictures independently).

A Video with an educational explanation.

Archival material (e.g. original documents scanned from a museum, archive or a library).

Documents kept in the family.

An Illustration.

### Comments

You can add a preliminary activity for material gathering: tour of a relevant site, visit an archive or library, meeting senior residents, etc.

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### Activity no. 2:

#### **Copyediting for an existing Wikipedia article**

**a.** Choose in advance articles with faulty language.

You can use the list of articles that require editing in Wikipedia. To see the list, enter in Wikipedia's search line: "Category:Wikipedia articles needing copy edit".



**b.** Ask the students to correct language faults in these articles, while implementing as much rules as possible studied in grammar lessons.

**Comment:**

You can encourage the students to receive help during the activity from the professional language counseling in Wikipedia. To reach the "help desk", click on the option "help" at the side bar of any Wikipedia page.

**Activity no. 3:**

**Improving content for an existing article**

**a.** Choose subjects from the curriculum for which the articles require slight improvement.

You can use the list of articles that require rewriting in Wikipedia. To see the list, enter in Wikipedia's search line: "Category:Wikipedia articles needing rewrite".

**b.** Ask the students to complete articles found missing, and amend inaccuracies.

**Activity no. 4:**

**Translating activity**

Choose subjects for which the articles in Wikipedia are lacking, while the parallel articles in other language are better.

Ask the students to translate the articles and incorporate the translation into Wikipedia.

**Comments:**

Clarify to the students that when translating an article, they should refrain from copying the bibliography sources included in it, unless they were used in the process of learning.

## **Second activities**

### **cluster:**

Active Content  
Creation

### **Activity no. 5: Expanding stubs**

In Wikipedia, a “stub” is a short article in need of expansion.

**a.** Enter the list of stubs in Wikipedia.

To see the list, enter in Wikipedia's search line: “Category:Stubs”.

**b.** Compose a short list of stubs in subjects from the curriculum.

**c.** Ask the students to choose stubs from the list, study their subjects, and expand them.

### **Activity no. 6: Creating new articles**

Create a list of subjects from the curriculum that still lack articles in Wikipedia.

You can use the list of requested articles in Wikipedia. To see the list, enter in Wikipedia's search line: “Category:Wikipedia requested articles”.

Ask the students to choose subjects from the list, study them and write articles about them.

### **Activity no. 7: Adding footnotes**

Ask the students to read papers in one of the curriculum subjects, and chose related Wikipedia articles.

Ask the students to add information to the articles, based on the papers they have read, and to indicate the information source in footnotes according to the customary rules.

### **Comments:**

This activity can apply to every Wikipedia article. Make sure to select papers taken from credible sources (scientific journals, books published by recognized publishing houses, etc.)



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**Inner Cover:** Ralf Roletschek , *Pressetermin zum Einsatz von Wikis in der Ausbildung mit der Berliner Morgenpost in der [www.archenhold.de Archenhold-Oberschule] Berlin- Treptow eine schriftliche Einverständniserklärung der Eltern zur Veröffentlichung der Fotos ihrer Kinder liegt vor.* ( English: learning with Mediawiki in a school in Berlin), 2012

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**Imagine a world in which every single person on the planet is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge. That's what we're doing.**

*Jimmy Wales*, Wikipedia Founder