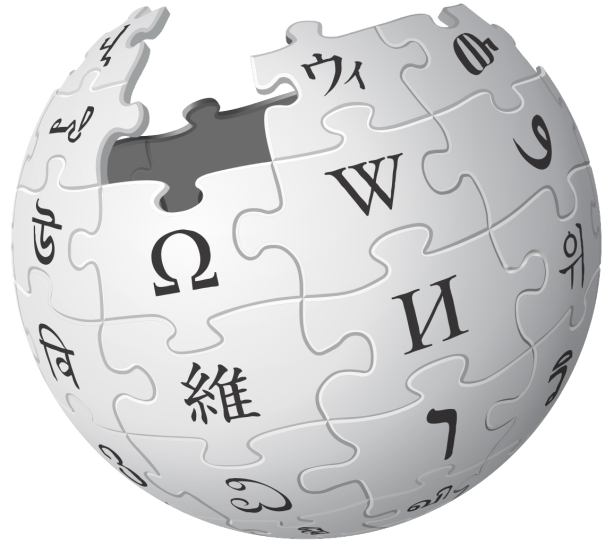


How to Evaluate a Wikipedia Article



Wikipedia is a trusted source of information for millions of people. According to a study in *Nature*¹, the quality of *English* Wikipedia could already in 2005 be compared to its main commercial competitor Britannica. However, just like with any other source the entries on Wikipedia need to be evaluated. Below are some basic guidelines for how to determine if a Wikipedia article is of good quality.

1. Check for template above article

If there is a cleanup template/banner above the article, the article is likely to have problems.

Examples:

- “To meet Wikipedia's quality standards, this article or section may require cleanup.”
- “This article or section does not cite its references or sources.”
- “Some information in this article or section has not been verified and may not be reliable.”

This means that one or several Wikipedia editors thought the article was biased or of low quality.

2. Check the footnotes

Check the footnotes within the article as well as the list underneath it.

- Are there many, a few or no footnotes?
- Do the sources in their turn seem to be of good quality? Examples include scientific studies and official websites, as opposed to newspapers and magazines.
- Are opinions of individuals clearly referenced with footnotes? Have editors made any in-text critical comments regarding the lack of sources?
- If you have time, check some of the sources to see that they support the article's claims.

An entry with no or few footnotes is more likely to be based on the author's own opinions. Several references to different sources probably mean that the authors have tried to cover all different aspects of the topic. Printed sources can be a big bonus, since scientific work is often published in journals or in book form.

3. Check the talk page

To get to the talk page, click the "talk" tab in the upper-left corner of the article.

- Is the article listed as a "good article"? (shown as a banner with a green +) or a "featured article"?
- Are there other banners that deal with either problems or positive sides to the article?
- Does there seem to be heated discussion or debate on the content of the article?

For more information see **"Researching with Wikipedia"**

Footnotes:

1. Giles, Jim. (2005) "Internet Encyclopaedias Go Head to Head". *Nature* **438**, 900-901 (15 December 2005)