

# A Quick Guide to Wikipedia

Advanced Legal Writing  
American University, Sept 2019  
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Peter B. Meyer, Wikimedia DC



To quickly get to the course page, search Wikipedia for **WP:AULegal**

# Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia

- Content is **freely licensed** for reuse
- Created and maintained by **volunteers**
- Non-profit educational project, supported by Wikimedia Foundation (WMF)
- Edits/versions are recorded
- “Everything’s in a database.”
- 5 million articles in English
- 250+ languages

# What a wiki is

A **wiki** is a Web site that:

- Can be edited from the browser quickly
- remembers its past versions
- has concise links between its own pages



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The Free Encyclopedia

- navigation
- [Main page](#)
  - [Contents](#)
  - [Featured content](#)
  - [Current events](#)
  - [Random article](#)
  - [Donate to Wikipedia](#)
  - [Wikipedia store](#)

search

[article](#) [talk](#) [edit this page](#) [edit source](#) [page](#)

## Copyright law of Albania [ [edit](#) | [edit source](#) ]

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This article is a brief summary of Law No. 35/2016 "*On the Rights of the Author and Other Rights Related to*", approved by the [Albanian Parliament](#) on 31 March 2016.<sup>[1]</sup> The purpose of the law is to guarantee the protection of the author's copyrights and other related rights.

### Summary [ [edit](#) | [edit source](#) ]

The subject matter of copyrighted work shall be any original intellectual creation in the literary, artistic and scientific domain, having an individual character, irrespective of the manner and form of its expression, its type, value or purpose, unless otherwise provided for in this law.<sup>[2]</sup>

Works of Copyright subjected to protection shall be in particular:

- I. works of speech expressed through literary and journalistic texts, lectures, religious sermons (written or oral works, and computer programs);

- When I'm logged in, at the very top it shows:
- my username, linking to my user page
  - my talk page where people can write to me
  - a Sandbox (for editing practice)
  - a Watchlist (a list of pages I'm "watching")
  - and a list of my contributions ("edits").

# History of an article

Any user can see the history of changes to a wiki page

## Copyright law of France: Revision history

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia  
[View logs for this page](#) ([view filter log](#))

### Filter revisions

External tools: [Find addition/removal](#) ([Alternate](#)) · [Find edits by user](#) · [Page statistics](#) · [Pageviews](#) · [Fix dead links](#)

For any version listed below, click on its date to view it. For more help, see [Help:Page history](#) and [Help:Edit summary](#). (cur) = difference from current version, (prev) = difference from preceding version, m = [minor edit](#), → = [section edit](#), ← = [automatic edit summary](#)  
(newest | [oldest](#)) View (newer 150 | [older 150](#)) ([20](#) | [50](#) | [100](#) | [250](#) | [500](#))

Compare selected revisions

- [\(cur | prev\)](#)  [07:59, 19 July 2019](#) [ProfessorPine](#) ([talk](#) | [contribs](#)) [m](#) . . (30,654 bytes) (+4) . . (*→History: typo*) ([undo](#) | [thank](#)) (*Tag: PHP7*)
- [\(cur | prev\)](#)  [15:44, 9 July 2019](#) [InternetArchiveBot](#) ([talk](#) | [contribs](#)) . . (30,650 bytes) (+386) . . (*Rescuing 5 sources and tagging 0 as dead. #IABot (v2.0beta15)*) ([undo](#))
- [\(cur | prev\)](#)  [07:51, 30 June 2019](#) [Monkbot](#) ([talk](#) | [contribs](#)) [m](#) . . (30,264 bytes) (-4) . . (*→History: Task 14: cs1 template fixes: misused |publisher= (1x/0x);*) ([undo](#)) (*Tag: AWB*)
- [\(cur | prev\)](#)  [12:04, 9 May 2019](#) [Ost316](#) ([talk](#) | [contribs](#)) [m](#) . . (30,268 bytes) (+65) . . (*WP:AWB cleanup, replaced: → , Intellectual Property Code → {{illIntellectual Property CodelfrlCode de la propriété intellectuelle|vertical-align=sup}}*) (4), *fr:Prorogations de guerre* →) ([undo](#) | [thank](#)) (*Tag: AWB*)
- [\(cur | prev\)](#)  [07:54, 15 April 2019](#) [Gonny](#) ([talk](#) | [contribs](#)) . . (30,203 bytes) (-37) . . (*→External links*) ([undo](#) | [thank](#))
- [\(cur | prev\)](#)  [15:27, 7 April 2019](#) [Gonny](#) ([talk](#) | [contribs](#)) . . (30,240 bytes) (+6) . . (*→External links: replacing template per TfD*) ([undo](#) | [thank](#))
- [\(cur | prev\)](#)  [22:28, 4 February 2019](#) [42.61.113.178](#) ([talk](#)) . . (30,234 bytes) (+201) . . ([undo](#))
- [\(cur | prev\)](#)  [22:25, 4 February 2019](#) [42.61.113.178](#) ([talk](#)) . . (30,033 bytes) (+16) . . ([undo](#))
- [\(cur | prev\)](#)  [12:28, 30 September 2018](#) [Dpvue](#) ([talk](#) | [contribs](#)) . . (30,017 bytes) (+17) . . ([undo](#) | [thank](#)) (*Tag: Visual edit*)
- [\(cur | prev\)](#)  [03:25, 9 September 2018](#) [Hmains](#) ([talk](#) | [contribs](#)) [m](#) . . (30,000 bytes) (-34) . . (*standard quote handling in WP;standard Apostrophe/quotation marks in WP; MOS general fixes*) ([undo](#) | [thank](#)) (*Tag: AWB*)
- [\(cur | prev\)](#)  [16:23, 6 September 2018](#) [Faunas](#) ([talk](#) | [contribs](#)) . . (30,034 bytes) (+4) . . ([undo](#) | [thank](#)) (*Tags: Mobile edit, Mobile web edit*)
- [\(cur | prev\)](#)  [16:22, 6 September 2018](#) [Faunas](#) ([talk](#) | [contribs](#)) . . (30,030 bytes) (+20) . . ([undo](#) | [thank](#)) (*Tags: Mobile edit, Mobile web edit*)
- [\(cur | prev\)](#)  [21:06, 6 July 2018](#) [Bamyers99](#) ([talk](#) | [contribs](#)) . . (30,010 bytes) (+2) . . (*Undid revision 847651021 by 176.241.84.234*) ([talk](#)) ([undo](#) | [thank](#)) (*Tag: Undo*)
- [\(cur | prev\)](#)  [17:13, 26 June 2018](#) [176.241.84.234](#) ([talk](#)) . . (30,008 bytes) (-2) . . ([undo](#)) (*Tags: Mobile edit, Mobile web edit*)

# Anatomy of an article

Lead section, or lede  
Notability must be made clear there

Table of contents appears automatically

Infoboxes help people grasp quickly

Images in public domain or fair use

Footnotes help people delve into topics

Categories, at the bottom, connect related subjects

The screenshot shows a Wikipedia article for Thomas Moran. Blue arrows point to the following elements:

- Title:** The article title "Thomas Moran" at the top.
- Edit view:** The "Edit view" link in the top right navigation bar.
- Infobox:** The biographical summary box on the right side, including a portrait of Thomas Moran and his birth/death information.
- Table of contents:** The "Contents" table on the left side of the article.
- 1st sub-section:** The "Biography" section header.
- Related articles:** The "See also" section listing related topics like "List of Hudson River School artists".
- Footnotes:** The "References" section at the bottom of the main text area.
- Non-wiki links:** The "External links" section at the bottom of the article.

At the bottom of the page, there is a "Categories" section with links to "1909 births", "1981 deaths", "British historians", "Harvard University alumni", "People educated at Westminster School, London", and "People of the Royal Observer Corps".

# What subjects get an article?

A topic is sufficiently “notable” if it has received significant coverage in reliable sources that are independent of the subject.

For more, search for **Wikipedia:Notability**, or type in search shortcut WP:N

Articles should make notability clear at the top.  
New editors, please get used to making small edits before starting a new article.

# Wikipedia Content Standards

- **Neutral Point of View**
- **Verifiability:** cite reliable sources that can be checked
- **No “original research”** - opinions, speculation, unpublished data
- **Assume good faith** in other editors
- **Avoid conflict of interest:** edit articles about self, employer, ideology with great caution

## Wikipedia policy

### Principles

Five pillars

What Wikipedia is not

Ignore all rules

### Content standards

Neutral point of view

Verifiability

No original research

Biographies of living persons

Article titles

### Working with others

Civility

No personal attacks

Harassment

No legal threats

Consensus

Dispute resolution

### More

List of policies

List of guidelines



# Neutral point of view (NPOV)

Wikipedia articles should represent diverse views fairly, proportionately, and in non-judgmental language

Distinguish facts from opinions or contested claims

The policy discussion is careful and sophisticated. To see more, enter search shortcut “WP:NPOV.” It’s interesting!

# Glossary

- Article -- the encyclopedia entries
- Editor – any user who makes an edit
- Admins
- GLAM = Galleries, Libraries, Archives & Museums
- Campus Ambassadors, and Wikipedia Education Foundation for class work
- Local chapters, like Wikimedia DC
- Events: Edit-a-thons, scan-a-thons, meetups
- Bots – software tools that edit outside the browser
- WikiProject – a message board and standards for a topic
  - There are WikiProjects for Architecture, Economics, Zimbabwe, Fungi, Visual Arts, Feminism, and Virginia. To find one search for e.g. WP:Virginia
  - Take a glance at WikiProject Law. (WP:Law)

# We're ready to edit!

(in a safe place at first, like a  
Sandbox)

You can always cancel, without saving,  
or undo a recently saved edit.

# Recommended: Register as an editor

## 1. Click “Create Account”

Your username will be associated with edits you make

## 2. Choose a username and password

Each individual (“editor”) should have only one account. Shared accounts are not allowed. Don’t create an account with the name of an organization.

## Advantages of having an account:

Communicating with others in the community


Can create articles, upload images, keep preferences

A record of work builds credibility, confidence, pride

You get your own “sandbox” page to practice editing

More likely to get help from others

Keeps computer’s IP address private.



Special page

Create account [Log](#)

### Create account

**Enter your information below.**

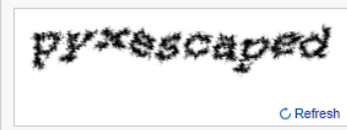
Username (help me choose)

Password

Confirm password

Email address (optional)

Security check

 [Refresh](#)

[Can't see the image?](#) [Request an account](#)

[Create your account](#)

**WIKIPEDIA**  
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[Main page](#)  
[Contents](#)  
[Featured content](#)  
[Current events](#)  
[Random article](#)  
[Donate to Wikipedia](#)  
[Wikimedia Shop](#)

Interaction  
[Help](#)  
[About Wikipedia](#)  
[Community portal](#)  
[Recent changes](#)  
[Contact page](#)

Toolbox  
[Upload file](#)  
[Special pages](#)  
[Printable version](#)

Languages

# There are two programs for editing

Edit Source	Visual editor
MediaWiki software markup language	What you see is what you get (WYSIWYG)
Type WP:CHEAT in the search box for more information	Type WP:VE/UG in the search box for more information
Relatively simple to learn, especially if you have any experience with HTML	Familiar symbols for formatting, similar to word processing programs
<b>Best for</b> ultimate control and ability to customize the page; working with wiki “templates” {{ }}	<b>Best for</b> making straightforward textual edits, adding links, headings, etc.
<b>Not very good for</b> people who dislike or get confused by markup languages! Also it is easy to lose your place, or make a typo. <i>Always click “Show Preview” before saving!</i>	<b>Not very good for</b> the more complex wiki markup, such as “templates” {{ }}, still a work in progress, so it can be buggy and/or confusing at times.

# Recommended: Turn on both editors

1. Click on *Preferences* at the top of the page
2. Under *Preferences/Editing/Editing mode* select “Show me both editor tabs” from the dropdown menu.
3. Save that Preference
4. Also recommended: Under *Preferences/Watchlist* turn on all these:

Add pages and files I edit to my watchlist  
Add pages and files I move to my watchlist  
Add pages I create and files I upload to my watchlist  
Add new files I upload to my watchlist

And expand “Days to show in watchlist”

# Recommended: Create a user page

1. Click the link at the top with your username on it.
2. Write something (like “Hello world”) and *click Show Preview*.
3. Leave a comment under Edit Summary explaining what you did. Now you have a user page!

This user page can be personalized as you wish.

If you are editing while employed or affiliated with an institution it is good form to post a conflict of interest statement. (Example: [[User:Sarasays]])

# Citing Sources



WIKIPEDIA  
The Free Encyclopedia

- Main page
- Contents
- Featured content
- Current events
- Random article
- Donate to Wikipedia
- Wikimedia Shop

## Interaction

- Help
- About Wikipedia
- Community portal
- Recent changes
- Contact page

## Tools

- What links here

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of a Wikipedia article for "Passenger pigeon". The navigation bar includes links for "Article", "Talk", "Read", "Edit source", "Edit beta", "View history", and "More". Below the navigation bar is a toolbar with a "Paragraph" dropdown menu, a text color selector, a link icon, and a "Cite" dropdown menu. The "Cite" dropdown menu is open, showing options for "Website", "Book", "News", "Journal", "Basic", and "Re-use". The article title "Passenger pigeon" is displayed in a large font, followed by the subtitle "From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia". Below the subtitle is a note: "For the 1986 Soviet film, see *Wild Pigeon (film)*". The main text of the article begins with "[The **passenger pigeon** or **wild pigeon** (*Ectopis*... is an exti... North American bird. Named after the French word *passager* for "passing b... was once the most abundant bird in North America, and possibly the world... accounted for more than a quarter of all birds in North America.<sup>[3]</sup> The spec... lived in enormous migratory flocks until the early 20th century, when huntin... habitat destruction led to its demise.<sup>[4]</sup> One flock in 1866 in southern Ontar... described as being 1 mi (1.5 km) wide and 300 mi (500 km) long, took 14 h... to pass, and held in excess of 3.5 billion birds. That number, if accurate, wc... likely represent a large fraction of the entire population at the time.<sup>[5]</sup>upper-e...".



# Users have edit histories

## User contributions

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

For [Peteforsyth](#) ([Talk](#) | [block](#) | [Block log](#) | [Logs](#) | [Deleted c](#)

Search for contributions

Show contributions of new accounts only

IP address or username:

Namespace:

From year (and earlier):

From month (and earlier):

[View](#) (newer 100) (older 100) (20 | 50 | 100 | 250 | 500)

- 11:41, July 6, 2008 (hist) (diff) User talk:John Abbe (*→Howdy!*; r) (top) [rollback]
- 11:37, July 6, 2008 (hist) (diff) m Talk:Shanghaied in Astoria (*moved Talk:Shanghaied In Astoria*)
- 11:36, July 6, 2008 (hist) (diff) m Shanghaied in Astoria (*moved Shanghaied In Astoria to Sha*)
- 11:36, July 6, 2008 (hist) (diff) N Talk:Shanghaied In Astoria (*moved Talk:Shanghaied In Asto*)
- 11:36, July 6, 2008 (hist) (diff) N Shanghaied In Astoria (*moved Shanghaied In Astoria to Sha*)
- 11:35, July 6, 2008 (hist) (diff) Shanghaiei (*section order, tweaks*) (top) [rollback]
- 11:26, July 6, 2008 (hist) (diff) N James Kelly (crimp) (*redir*) (top) [rollback]
- 11:25, July 6, 2008 (hist) (diff) Shanghaiei (*→Background: wikilinks*)
- 11:19, July 6, 2008 (hist) (diff) Heather Wilson (*→Fired U.S. attorney; connect another dot*) (
- 11:15, July 6, 2008 (hist) (diff) Heather Wilson (*further clarification*)
- 10:43, July 6, 2008 (hist) (diff) m Heather Wilson (*→Fired U.S. attorney; ref tidying*)

link to page edited;  
namespace shown  
before colon  
(here, User talk:)

time & date  
of change

link to  
article's  
history  
page

compare to  
previous  
version

m = minor  
edit,  
N = new  
article

edit summary  
(grey text  
indicates  
section)

(top) =  
page's most  
recent edit

# Talk pages

## **User talk pages**

These are public pages intended for text messages sent to particular users. To sign one's user name, there's a trick: put ~~~~, which fills out with the username when the edit is saved.

## **Article Talk Pages**

A place for editors to discuss the topic

Give you a feel about issues and controversies with the article

If you find an article has problems or errors, this is a place where you can make suggestions instead of editing it yourself

# We can thank other editors for their work!



- (cur | prev) ○ 19:51, March 29, 2013 Sarahobender (talk | contribs) . . (10,203 bytes) **(+569)** . . (undo | [thank](#))
- (cur | prev) ○ 19:46, March 29, 2013 Sarahobender (talk | contribs) . . (9,634 bytes) **(+171)** . . (undo | [thank](#))
- (cur | prev) ○ 19:32, March 29, 2013 Sarahobender (talk | contribs) . . (9,463 bytes) **(-15)** . . (undo | [thank](#))
- (cur | prev) ○ 19:20, March 29, 2013 Sarahobender (talk | contribs) . . (9,478 bytes) **(+1)** . . (undo | [thank](#))
- (cur | prev) ○ 19:12, March 29, 2013 Sarahobender (talk | contribs) . . (9,477 bytes) **(+9)** . . ([→Fortifying The Downtown Gallery](#)) (undo | [thank](#))
- (cur | prev) ○ 19:03, March 29, 2013 Sarahobender (talk | contribs) . . (9,468 bytes) **(+1,387)** . . ([→Early years](#)) (undo | [thank](#))
- (cur | prev) ○ 18:42, March 29, 2013 Sarahobender (talk | contribs) . . (8,081 bytes) **(+2,039)** . . ([→Later years](#)) (undo | [thank](#))
- (cur | prev) ○ 18:29, March 29, 2013 Sarahobender (talk | contribs) . . (6,042 bytes) **(+1,671)** . . (*created two sections*) (undo | [thank](#))
- (cur | prev) ○ 17:56, March 29, 2013 Sarahobender (talk | contribs) . . (4,371 bytes) **(+842)** . . ([→Selling the Modernists](#)) (undo | [thank](#))

Send a thank you notification to this user

## This brings a positive & collaborative spirit to the community

# Creating a new article

1. Do some searching around to confirm the article doesn't exist under a different name.
2. Draft the article stub in your user Sandbox.
3. Search (unsuccessfully) for the exact name of the article you want to create.
4. Click on the resulting redlink to create the page, paste in code from your Sandbox, Save.

***NOTE: “Submit for review” button is not required for registered editors.***

# To do online

1. See history of “Copyright law of France” and “Copyright law of Albania”
2. History page and Pageview Statistics
3. Look at talk pages, short and long
4. See a user page and a user talk page
5. Can rename a Sandbox page
6. Use WP:AULegal and see what it is
7. Name spaces: “main”, “talk”, etc
8. Visit WP:Copyright, WP:NPOV, WP:Village pump,
9. Commons vs. Fair Use

**This tutorial for was created by Georgina Goodlander (user:bathlander) for the “Wikipedia Edit-a-thon: The Civil War and American Art” event held Feb. 15, 2013.**

**It was adapted from “Introduction to Editing Wikipedia” by User:Sarasays.**

**Peter Meyer (user:econterms) has adapted it further.**

***Please feel free to expand, improve, re-use, and share!***