

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY—WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

HIST 312: Wiki Peer-Review Instructions

In approaching your peer-review, keep the following points in mind:

- Don't think of yourself as an English teacher armed with a red pen. The point of this assignment is not to correct/comment on the grammar or style.
- Start by providing positive reactions to ideas and clarity. Look for parts that make you think, "This is clear," or "This is well done."
 - In commenting on these points, try to be as specific as possible. Instead of writing "good", comment on the aspect of the article that you appreciated: good example, excellent quote or source, good organization.
- Try to avoid comments that sound like accusations ("You don't explain what this term in section #2 means"). Instead, ask questions of the writer ("Could you give a definition of this term in section 2?"). Questions invite a response, and they'll help the writer revise.

The review comments should be posted as a message on a User Talk page. This is different than leaving one on the Talk page of their sandbox (remember that "every" page on Wikipedia has a Talk page).

Your review will be organized into five sections with comments made on each aspect:

1. The Lead Section
2. Clarity of Article Structure
3. Coverage Balance
4. Content Neutrality
5. Sources

*Make sure to double check the main article page if only sections of it are in their sandbox (you can ask your colleague if you are unsure)

Based on the Wikipedia Peer Review Guidelines, evaluate each section as follows:

1. The Lead Section – will state the most important information, give good overview of the rest of the article. It will be concise but avoid repeating the article content.
 - Do I feel satisfied that I know the importance of the topic?
 - Looking at the lead again after reading the rest of the article, does the lead reflect the most important information?
 - Does it give more weight to certain parts of the article over others? Is anything missing? Is anything redundant?
2. Clarity of Article Structure – each important aspect of the article should have its own clear and distinct section
 - Are the sections organized well, in a sensible order? Would they make more sense presented some other way (chronologically, for example)?
3. Coverage Balance – the article should be a balanced summary of existing resources without a dominant viewpoint
 - Is each section's length equal to its importance to the article's subject? Are there sections in the article that seem unnecessary? Is anything off-topic?
 - Does the article reflect all the perspectives represented in the published literature? Are any significant viewpoints left out or missing?
 - Does the article draw conclusions or try to convince the reader to accept one particular point of view?
4. Content Neutrality – the article should not try to persuade the reader of a specific idea or view
 - Do you think you could guess the perspective of the author by reading the article?
 - Are there any words or phrases that don't feel neutral? For example, "the best idea," "most people," or negative associations, such as "While it's obvious that x, some insist that y."
 - Does the article make claims on behalf of unnamed groups or people? For example, "some people say..."
 - Does the article focus too much on negative or positive information? Remember, neutral doesn't mean "the best positive light" or "the worst, most critical light." It means a clear reflection of various aspects of a topic.
5. Sources – article content should be supported by good and reliable sources
 - Are most statements in the article connected to a reliable source, such as textbooks and journal articles? Or do they rely on blogs or self-published authors?

- Are there a lot of statements attributed to one or two sources? If so, it may lead to an unbalanced article, or one that leans too heavily into a single point of view.
- Are there any unsourced statements in the article, or statements that you can't find stated in the references? Just because there is a source listed, doesn't mean it's presented accurately!