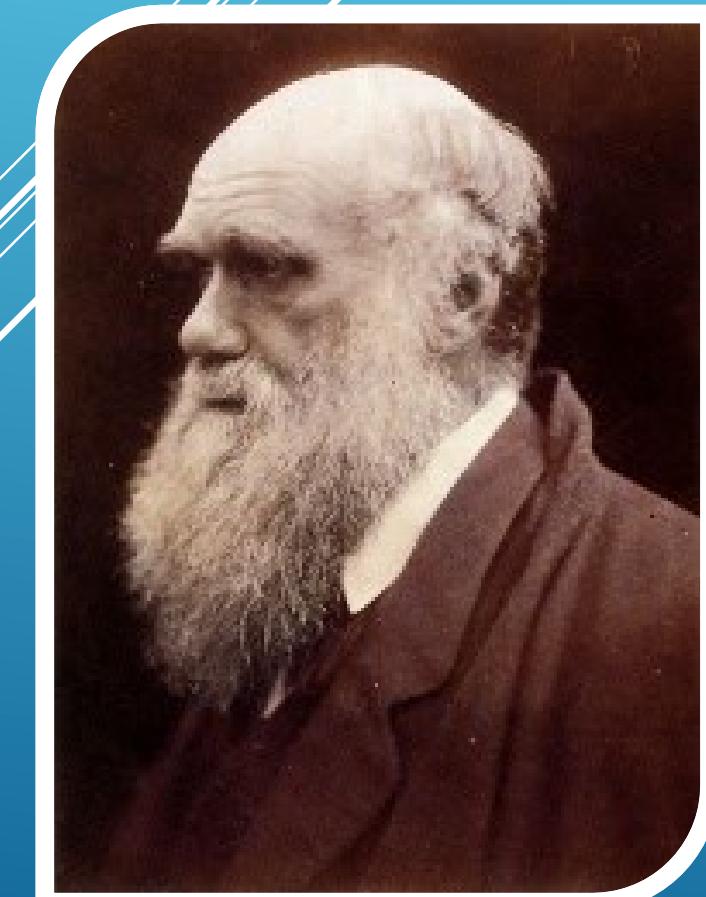


# WIKIPEDIA

Writing about  
People





# NOTABILITY

- ▶ For people, the person who is the topic of a biographical article should be "worthy of notice" or "worthy of note" – that is, "remarkable" or "significant, interesting, or unusual enough to deserve attention or to be recorded" within Wikipedia as a written account of that person's life.
- ▶ "Notable" in the sense of being "famous" or "popular" – although not irrelevant – is secondary

The opening paragraph should establish notability, neutrally describe the person, and provide context.

The opening paragraph should usually have:

- ▶ Full Name(s) and title(s), if any
- ▶ Dates of birth and death, if known.

## **OPENING PARAGRAPH – THINGS TO INCLUDE**

The opening paragraph should also have:

- Context (location or nationality);
  - In most modern-day cases this will mean the country of which the person is a citizen, national or permanent resident, or if notable mainly for past events, the country where the person was a citizen, national or permanent resident when the person became notable.
- The notable positions the person held, activities they took part in or roles they played;
- Why the person is notable.

## OPENING PARAGRAPH

1. Avoid overloading the lead sentence with various sundry roles; instead, emphasize what made the person notable.
2. *Ethnicity, religion, or sexuality should generally not be in the lead unless it is relevant to the subject's notability.*
3. Similarly, previous nationalities or the country of birth should not be mentioned in the opening sentence unless they are relevant to the subject's notability.

## THE OPENING PARAGRAPH – THINGS TO AVOID

Cleopatra VII Philopator (December 70 BCE/January 69 BCE – c. August 12, 30 BCE) was a queen of ancient Egypt. She was the last member of the Macedonian Ptolemaic dynasty to rule Egypt ...

## AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE



1. **Name(s) and title(s), if any**
2. **Dates of birth and death, if known.**
3. **Context (location or nationality);**
  1. In most modern-day cases this will mean the country of which the person is a citizen, national or permanent resident, or if notable mainly for past events, the country where the person was a citizen, national or permanent resident when the person became notable.
4. **The notable positions the person held, activities they took part in or roles they played;**
5. **Why the person is notable.**

**YOUR TURN! FIND AN ARTICLE ON WIKIPEDIA  
THAT YOU FEEL SATISFIES THESE CRITERIA**

# BRAINSTORM

ARE BIOGRAPHICAL  
ARTICLES ON  
LIVING PEOPLE  
DIFFERENT FROM  
BIOGRAPHICAL  
ARTICLES ON THE DEAD?



**Editors must take particular care when adding information about living persons to any Wikipedia page.**

Such material requires a high degree of sensitivity, and must adhere *strictly* to all applicable laws, to this policy, and to Wikipedia's three core content policies:

1. **Neutral point of view (NPOV)**
2. **Verifiability (V)**
3. **No original research (NOR)**

## **BIOGRAPHIES OF LIVING PEOPLE**

- ▶ We must get the article *right*.
- ▶ Be very firm about the use of high-quality sources.
- ▶ All quotations and any material challenged or likely to be challenged must be explicitly attributed to a reliable, published source, which is usually done with an inline citation.
- ▶ Contentious material about living persons (or, in some cases, recently deceased) that is unsourced or poorly sourced – whether the material is negative, positive, neutral, or just questionable – should be removed immediately and without waiting for discussion.
- ▶ Users who persistently or egregiously violate this policy may be blocked from editing.

## BIOGRAPHIES OF LIVING PEOPLE

- ▶ **Biographies of living persons ("BLPs") must be written conservatively and with regard for the subject's privacy.**
- ▶ **Wikipedia is an encyclopaedia, not a tabloid.**
- ▶ **The burden of evidence rests with the editor who adds or restores material.**

## BIOGRAPHIES OF LIVING PEOPLE

Biographies of living persons should generally be written in the present tense, and biographies of deceased persons in the past tense.

If a person is living but has retired, use "is a former" or "is a retired" rather than the past tense "was".

*Correct – John Smith* (1946–2003) was a baseball pitcher ...

*Correct – John Smith* (born 1946) is a former baseball pitcher ...

*Incorrect – John Smith* (born 1946) **was** a baseball pitcher ...

Historical events should be written in the past tense in all biographies:

- Smith played for the Baltimore Orioles between 1968 and 1972 ...

TENSE

When discussing the work of a writer or philosopher, even if they are dead, the present tense may be used:

"In Calvin's *Institutes* he teaches ...".

The general rule is to describe statements made in literature, philosophy and art in the eternal present.

TENSE

Utilise existing pages as examples of good practice e.g. **Charles Rennie Mackintosh**

Search:

[Wikipedia:Manual\\_of\\_Style/Biographies](#)

[Wikipedia:Biographies\\_of\\_living\\_persons](#)

**REMEMBER TO ORGANISE THE PAGE INTO RELEVANT SECTIONS**

**Ask yourself:**

- ▶ **Is this person notable?**
- ▶ **Does the first paragraph explain their notability?**
- ▶ **Is my use of tense consistent?**
- ▶ **Have I organised my page into clearly demarcated sections?**
- ▶ **Is my article clear and accessible for all to read?**
- ▶ **Does it make sense to me? Will make it sense to other readers?**

**NO HARD AND FAST RULES**



[edit]

THANKS FOR LISTENING