

An Introduction to Wikipedia

Getting help on Wikipedia

5.1 - Where to get help

This document is part of An Introduction to Wikipedia, a course on [WikiLearn](#).

In this document we will look at where to find help on Wikipedia from other Wikipedia volunteers.

Where to get help on Wikipedia

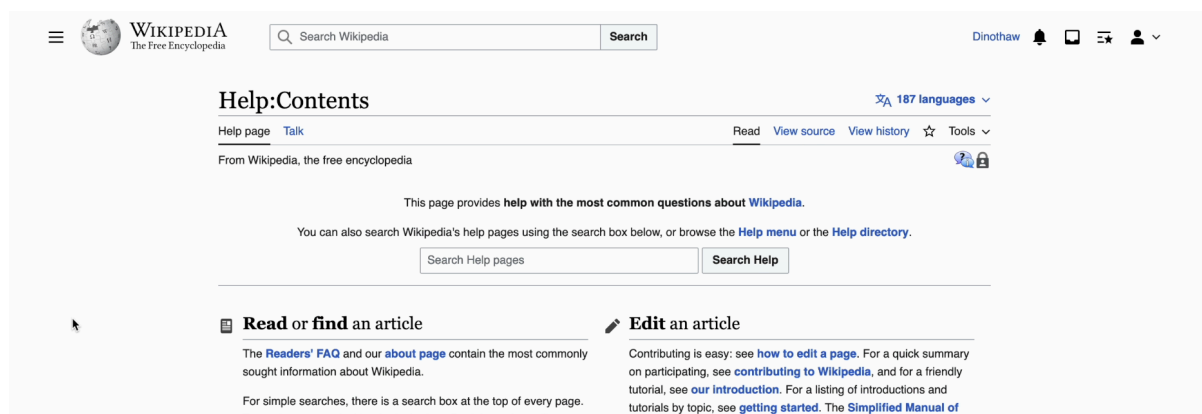
Before we start editing, I want to show you where to go if you need help. Although you're welcome to reach out to me, or use the discussion area on WikiLearn, there's always a chance I'll miss your message. But thankfully there's places on Wikipedia where you can get help right away from a large pool of volunteers.

The first place I'll show you can be accessed from anywhere on Wikipedia from the Main menu.

If you've hidden the Main menu, click the three lines next to the Wikipedia logo to open the menu. Then click on Help, as highlighted by the red circle below.



On the Help page, you'll find a search box that you can search to help you find an answer to your questions.



Looking down the page, there's a FAQ, some guides to editing and creating articles, and below that are resources on joining Wikipedia, navigating Wikipedia, tips for your Account Settings...basically everything you need should be here.

The screenshot shows the top portion of the Wikipedia Help:Contents page. At the top left is the Wikipedia logo and a search bar. The page title is "Help:Contents" with a language selector for 187 languages. Below the title are navigation links for "Read", "View source", "View history", and "Tools". A central message states: "This page provides help with the most common questions about Wikipedia." Below this is a search box for help pages and a "Search Help" button. The page is divided into two main columns: "Read or find an article" and "Edit an article". The "Read or find an article" section includes links to the Readers' FAQ, about page, search box, and mobile access. The "Edit an article" section includes links to how to edit a page, contributing to Wikipedia, introduction, getting started, manual of style, cheatsheet, bolding, references, conflict of interest guideline, vandalism cleanup, and task center. At the bottom, there are links to "Report a problem with an article" and "Create a new article or upload media".

But I want to draw your attention to the Stuck section further down the page.

This screenshot shows the "Stuck" section of the Wikipedia Help:Contents page. The section title is "Stuck?" and it provides several resources for users who are having trouble. It includes links to "frequently asked questions", "where to ask questions or make comments", the "Teahouse" for new users, the "Help desk" for more complex questions, and the "help chatroom" for live help. It also mentions the "Village pump" for technical issues. Below the "Stuck" section are two other sections: "Directories" and "Help by topic". The "Directories" section lists the "Directory", "Help related" (including Help directory, Request directory, and Protocols and conventions), and "Help by topic" (including Help Menu, Navigating Wikipedia, Joining Wikipedia, Editing Wikipedia, Links and references, Images and media, Keeping track of changes, Policies and guidelines, Asking questions, and The Wikipedia community).

Sometimes it's just easier to ask a person, and there's two links you will find useful.

The first is the Teahouse, a place for new users to get help. The other is the chatroom for getting live help.

Teahouse

Let's look at the Teahouse first. Click on the Teahouse link under Stuck. This will take you to the page seen below.

The screenshot shows the Wikipedia:Teahouse main page. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation links. The main heading is "Wikipedia:Teahouse" with a language selector for 31 languages. Below the heading, there are links for "Project page" and "Talk". The page content includes a "Welcome to the Teahouse!" message, a "Ask a question" button, and links to "Question forum", "Meet your hosts", and "Articles to improve". There is also a "Search Help pages" box and a "Most recent archives" section.

Here, you can ask a question, search for previously asked questions, or even scroll down and read other questions that have recently been asked.

If you need to ask a question, click the blue Ask a question button. You'll be prompted to add a subject summarising your question, and then describe the question itself.

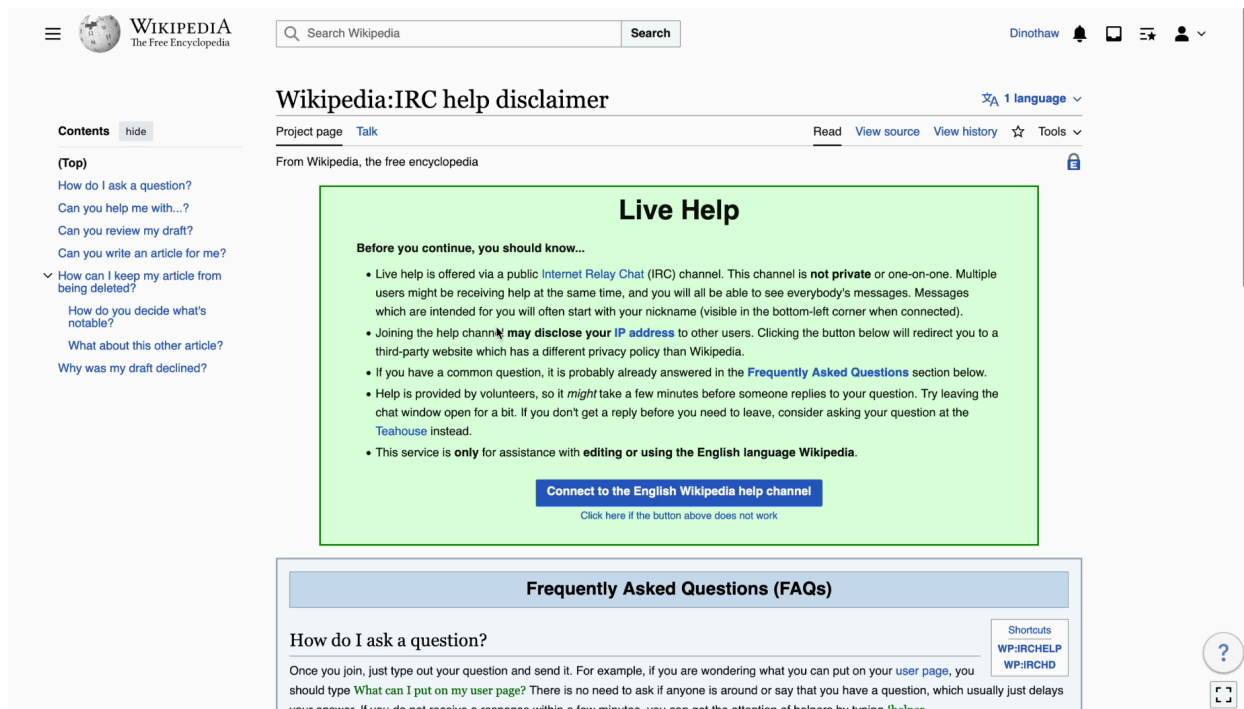
The screenshot shows the "Ask a question" form on the Wikipedia:Teahouse page. The form has a "Subject" field and a "Description" field. There are also "Visual" and "Source" tabs. The "Add topic" button is highlighted. The form is titled "Help us to help you:" and includes instructions on how to provide a link to the page being asked about.

Try to be as clear as possible. For example, are you using Source editor or Visual editor? Are you editing on your phone, a tablet, or on a computer? This will help the person who answers your question.

Once you've finished typing the question, click Add Topic. Your question will be added at the bottom of the page. You should get an alert notification in the bell icon at the top when someone has answered you, but it's worth checking back at any time just in case.

Live chatroom

If you prefer live help, go back to the Help page, and under Stuck click on help chatroom. You'll see this page below.



The screenshot shows the Wikipedia:IRC help disclaimer page. At the top, there's the Wikipedia logo and a search bar. The page title is "Wikipedia:IRC help disclaimer" with a language dropdown set to "1 language". Below the title, there are links for "Project page" and "Talk", and options to "Read", "View source", "View history", and "Tools". A central green box titled "Live Help" contains a disclaimer: "Before you continue, you should know..." followed by a list of bullet points explaining that help is provided via a public IRC channel, is not private, and that users should disclose their IP address. A blue button labeled "Connect to the English Wikipedia help channel" is prominently displayed, with a smaller link below it: "Click here if the button above does not work". Below this, a "Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)" section is visible, starting with "How do I ask a question?".

There's some information here explaining that help is provided by volunteers, and you might need to wait a few minutes for help.

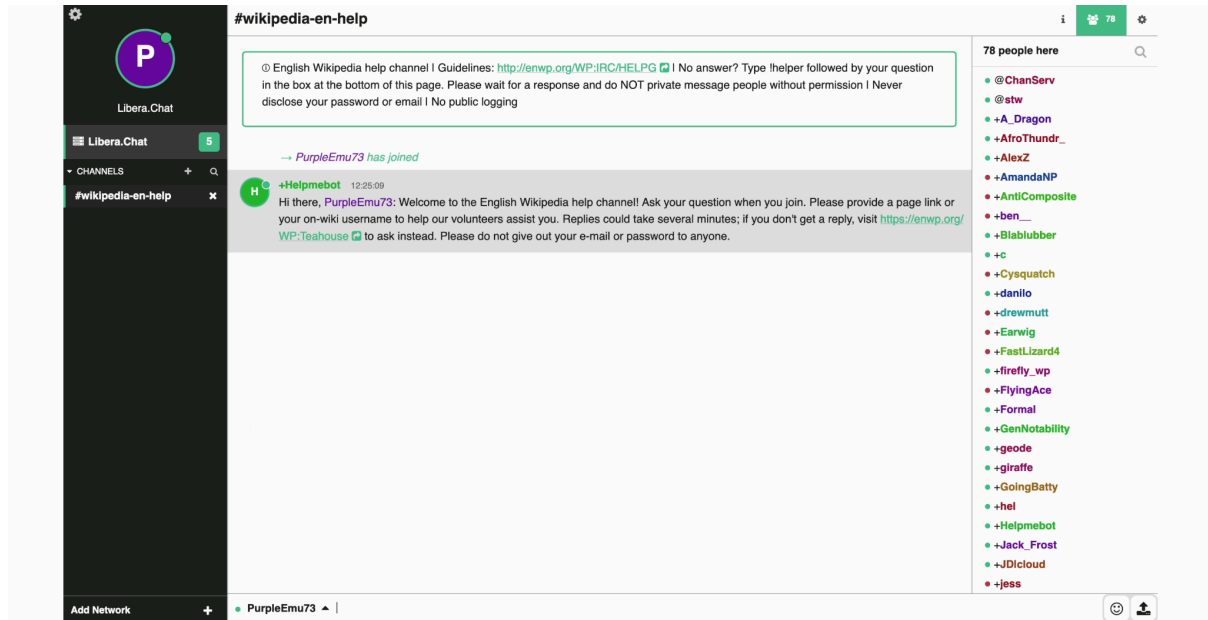
Once you're ready, click the large blue Connect button, or there is an alternative link below this too if that doesn't work. Then you'll be taken to a page like the one below.



The screenshot shows the IRC chatroom connection page. It features a "Hello!" heading and a form with the following fields: "Nick" (containing "PurpleEmu73"), "Channel" (containing "#wikipedia-en-help"), and a "Start" button. There is also a checkbox for "I have a password" which is currently unchecked. A large black rectangular area is present on the right side of the page, likely representing a redacted image or a placeholder.

You'll be given a random username, but you can change this if you like. Click Start and the chatroom will open.

After a moment, you'll be welcomed with some tips, and you can see on the right there's quite a few people in the chat either to help with answers, or maybe they're asking questions too. Once you're done here, you can leave whenever you like.



Wikimedia Chapters

There might be other ways to get help too, such as your local Wikimedia community.

For example, in Australia, [Wikimedia Australia](#) hosts regular events that let people drop in online to ask questions and get help from their staff and volunteers. You might also have a local group or chapter nearby who meet in person or online.

There are many groups around the world, and Wikimedia funds over 30 official chapters.

To find a list of some international chapters, go to [Wikimedia.org](#) and click chapters, or click [here](#).

Scrolling down the list, you should be able to find your local chapter and their contact details.

Clicking [Wikimedia Australia](#) [takes me to a page](#) with more information about the chapter, and a link to their website.

Your local chapter's website might list in-person or online events you can attend, or you could contact them directly to ask for guidance.

Mentors

Finally, in an earlier lesson we mentioned the mentor program. This connects new users with experienced ones, and after you've made your first edit you will become eligible.

To see if you've been assigned a mentor yet, click on your Username to visit your Homepage.

Then on the right side, below all of the statistics under Your impact, you will see information about a mentor, if one has been assigned to you. This will appear in the area highlighted by the red circle below.

The screenshot shows a Wikipedia article page for "Australian Centre for Field Robotics". On the right side, there is a "Your recent activity (last 60 days)" section with a bar chart showing 26 edits and a line graph showing 3,260 views. Below this is a "Most viewed (since your edit)" list with items like "West Coast Wilderness Railway" (1,122 views) and "Australian jazz" (800 views). At the bottom of the right sidebar, a "Mentor for editing" section is circled in red. It contains the text: "If you have questions about editing, an experienced editor can be assigned as your mentor to help you." and a link "Get a mentor".

If you aren't seeing a mentor yet, then there may not be enough mentors available at the moment.

The mentor program is still rolling out, and hopefully there will be one assigned to you soon.

Below, there are links to find more information about the mentor program, and you can see who might be available to take on new users such as yourself.

Additional sources and further reading

Help page on Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:Contents>

The Teahouse: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Teahouse>

Wikipedia Help Live Chat:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:IRC_help_disclaimer

List of Mentors:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Growth_Team_features/Mentor_list

Introduction to Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:Introduction>

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