

Women's studies



Editing Wikipedia can be daunting for newbies, especially as a student editor contributing to Wikipedia for the first time in a class assignment. This guide is for students assigned to add content related to women's studies articles to Wikipedia.

Be accurate

Wikipedia is a resource millions of people use to inform themselves about the world, guide policy decisions, or make sense of their culture and society.

By documenting and sharing accurate and objective content about or related to women, you will help Wikipedia present a wider spectrum of human knowledge. You will ensure that women are represented on one of the most-read websites, and that everyone has access to important information about women's achievements and challenges.

Understand the guidelines

Take time to read and understand the suggestions here to maximize the value of your contributions to Wikipedia. If you post something that doesn't meet these guidelines, resolving it may take up valuable time that could have been spent improving content.

If you aren't comfortable working within these guidelines, talk to your instructor about an alternative off-wiki assignment.

Engage with editors

Part of the Wikipedia experience is receiving and responding to feedback from other editors. Don't wait until the last day to make a contribution, or you may miss out on important comments, advice, and ideas. Volunteers from the Wikipedia community might read, respond, or ask questions about your work. If you get a comment, make sure you acknowledge it. Discussion is a crucial part of the Wikipedia process.

Watch out for close paraphrasing

Wikipedia articles are written in your own words. Plagiarizing by copy-and-pasting or close paraphrasing — when most of the words are changed, but the structure and meaning of the original text remains — is against the rules.

For a Wikipedia assignment, plagiarism is a violation of your university's academic honor code. Plagiarism on Wikipedia will be caught by other editors, and there will be a permanent record of plagiarism tied to your account. Even with standard resources or authors, you cannot directly copy descriptions of social concepts, studies, or theories into Wikipedia. The best way to avoid this hassle is to make sure you understand your material, draw from several sources, and write it in your own words.

If it's important to use a direct quotation, be sure to set it off with quotation marks, and cite the source. Longer quotations, up to about six lines, are indented as block quotes and don't take quotation marks.

Don't be scared. Be bold!

Everybody on Wikipedia wants to make it the best it can be. Take the time to understand these guidelines, and soon you'll be contributing important knowledge to a resource millions of people use every day!

Getting started

Choosing an article

Your instructor might offer you a list of topics to choose from, or ask you to select your own.

Good candidates include topics which represent the lives, achievements, and struggles of women and the ongoing political, social, and cultural movements and issues that reflect gender and its intersections with other identity categories, both now and historically.

- Choose a topic with extensive literature in independent, peer-reviewed journals or books. Some Wikipedia articles are short (and will remain so) simply because there aren't enough reliable sources to expand them.
- Search for a topic with interesting and plentiful sources first, then choose a Wikipedia article to develop based on what you find.
- Choose a topic that isn't already well developed on Wikipedia. Look for a “stub” or “start-class” article — check the talk page for an article's rating. To find a stub in a field that interests you, type this “shortcut” in the Wikipedia search bar | *shortcut* [WP:STUBS](#) .

Finding good candidates

For global issues, search for “Women in,” “Women's rights in,” or “Feminism in,” etc, followed by a country of interest.

For biographies of women, see lists of articles created by various communities (WikiProjects) dedicated to, for example, artists, historical figures, scientists, women's rights activists, writers, and other notable women.

For topics related more broadly to feminism, try | *shortcut*

[PORTAL:FEMINISM](#)

or | *shortcut*

[CATEGORY:FEMINISM STUBS](#)

Organizing your article

Every article will be unique, but here are some suggestions for what to include in your article. You can add, remove, or reorder sections as appropriate for your topic.

An article on a cultural product

Books, art, films, or other products that reflect women, or women's issues, are notable if they have substantive coverage in three sources.

Also see | *shortcuts*

[MOS:NOVELS](#) and [MOS:VISUAL](#) .

An article on a prominent figure

A great example for a biography page is Emma Goldman, Emmeline Pankhurst, or Harriet Tubman. Many good biography pages on Wikipedia are structured as follows:

- Lead section, highlighting key points.
- Career, actions, or defining experiences, provided chronologically and with historical context.
- Legacy: major contributions to policy, theory, culture, or other fields.
- Publications or other works.

There are stringent requirements for editing articles on living persons, and sources should be reviewed more strictly for neutrality and verifiability. Type | *shortcut* [WP:BLP](#) into Wikipedia's search bar to find out more.

An article on a social condition

Examples of social conditions include perceptions of transgender youth, or the economic status of Tibetan women in Nepal. Useful touchstones include the following:

- Lead section.
- Define the condition, including where it occurs and who is affected. What forms of identity organize the affected community?
- Context and history for the issue, including prominent activists, relevant theorists, and/or leaders.
- If applicable, outline remedy efforts and criticisms those remedies face, presented neutrally and with sourced evidence.

Finding sources

Think critically

How do you identify sources you can use to build your Wikipedia article? Your sources should be reliable, published, and generally, reviewed by a third party for accuracy. The majority view and significant minority views should be presented objectively. “Published” work can include films, podcasts, or other work produced by a reliable author.

Evaluating sources

Learning to evaluate sources is a core component of engaging critically in your field and on Wikipedia.

The first consideration is the **author**. Authors published in a peer review process are preferred to authors who self-publish, whether that be a blog post or a book series.

The second consideration is the **text** itself. Wikipedia articles may include unchallenged conclusions that contradict the dominant consensus of those in your field. Is there a reliable, trusted source that could illustrate the issue from a feminist perspective? If so, use that source to contribute this viewpoint to the article.

Finally, consider the **publisher**. Work cited could come from a reliable publisher of sociology literature, such as Sage Publications, Verso, or Routledge for books, or journals such as *Gender and Society* or *Feminist Economics*.

For more on finding good sources, see | *shortcut* [WP:RS](#) .

What is a shortcut?

The text [WP:RS](#) is what's known on Wikipedia as a shortcut.

You can type shortcuts like this into the search bar to pull up specific pages.

Writing your article

Wikipedia is not a place for crafting compelling critiques of culture or society. It *is* a place for sharing the knowledge that informs those critiques. That's why well-researched information on women's lives, achievements, and experiences is so important. Because Wikipedia is often lacking this kind of information, these contributions improve the content and quality of articles.

Wikipedia's neutrality guidelines encourage “representing fairly, proportionately, and, as far as possible, without bias, all of the significant views.” Articles should “indicate the relative prominence of opposing views.” In many articles, women and women's perspectives are missing from what has been established as “neutral.” Good contributions will incorporate these viewpoints, but cannot advocate for them.

While Wikipedia requires a neutral tone for articles, it does not require neutral sources. Interviews with feminist advocates, regardless of their “neutrality,” may illustrate a particular viewpoint well. Cite the text, and acknowledge the perspective if it is relevant. For example, “*According to the feminist scholar Sara Ahmed...*”

Despite Wikipedia's neutrality guidelines, you may encounter biased language. You can change inappropriately gendered language, such as changing “actress” to “actor.” You may see that women's achievements aren't represented adequately. For example, at the time of this printing, archaeologist Mary Leakey's lead section immediately names her as archaeologist Louis Leakey's wife, while Louis' lead section doesn't mention Mary. You can challenge this type of bias through careful editing (but don't change direct quotes).

For more on Wikipedia's Neutrality guidelines, see | *shortcut* [WP:NPOV](#) .

Writing your article

As you start writing, keep these guidelines in mind:

- Unlike most school assignments, Wikipedia doesn't permit original research. A Wikipedia article should cover what the literature says, not your interpretation.
- Be sure you're writing impersonal, fact-based encyclopedic content, not an essay or blog post. See the *Editing Wikipedia* brochure linked from your course page if you need a refresher on the difference in tone.
- Let the facts speak for themselves. Respect your readers and recognize that empirical data doesn't always lead two readers to the same conclusion. Consider what this means about your own interpretations of empirical data.
- Give appropriate weight to aspects of the topic as the literature covers it.
- If you discuss research, aim for a thorough description of its methodologies. This is why it is important to understand your material and cross-reference your understanding with a variety of sources.
- Don't procrastinate! Writing good, reliable Wikipedia articles takes time. Don't wait until the last minute. If you get stuck, always ask your instructor for extra time rather than adding content to Wikipedia that doesn't meet these guidelines.
- If you have questions about contributing to Wikipedia, you can ask the Wikipedia Content Expert listed on your course page, or post a question at the Teahouse. You can find the Teahouse by entering | *shortcut* WP:TH into the search bar.
- Take pride in your contributions! Your hard work will bring awareness to women, women's achievements, and ongoing human rights issues to a mass audience.

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