The Art of the Article:
How and why you should contribute

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WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

Reasons for Contributing

Broader impact: science outreach and education

Introduction for new & future students

Collaborative development of teaching materials

The fun!

Wikipedia: how it works and how well

Wikipedia is an encyclopedia, produced by a collaborative community.
It's meant to be read by lay-people, but it serves as a reference work for scholars.

Roadmap

Articles and how good they are

Contributors, and how they collaborate

A mental model for Wikipedia articles

WP articles are like *Cell* mini-reviews, but...

 Written for general readers, not fellow experts

No original data, conclusions or speculation

Meant to be read in under 45 minutes

Use "summary style"

Spin off details into daughter articles

Use links to specify exactly what you mean

A typical article has 4 parts:

The lead section **(most important part!)**

Stand-alone summary of whole article
Must be intelligible to lay-readers
3-4 paragraphs, 1 image

Main sections

Addenda

Navigational/organizational links

How good are Wikipedia's science articles?

Nafissa Yakubova, Jillian Kallenbach, Andrew Ekdahl, Lisa Lesko, Elizabeth Reed, Kelly Schwartz
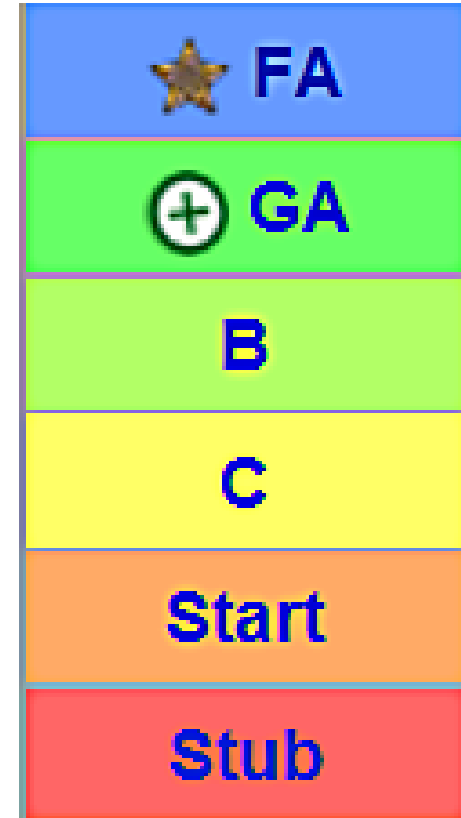
Wikipedia has superb coverage

is far more up-to-date than the Britannica

Better illustrated and referenced

Writing is generally worse, esp. the leads

Internal assessment; 2 thresholds

Medical articles:

    1% excellent, 84% incomplete, 15% ambiguous

Lists of NIH articles, organized by Institutes

Who writes high-quality science articles?

One person can contribute significantly

Examples of Tim and Adrianne

Vast areas of Wikipedia are under-developed.

Experts and non-experts can work well together

Archaea example

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Featured_article_candidates/Archaea

The craft of writing encyclopedia articles can be learned.

Your first Featured Article may be slow, but soon you'll be dashing them off, with help from your friends.

Editing collaboratively

Develop a network of friends.

Be open to different perspectives and emphases, and be willing to compromise.

Discuss, discuss, ask for help, discuss.

Be patient and gentle and courteous.

Don't pull rank.

Stay grounded in references.

How Mistakes Are Corrected

How to make stable corrections with minimal effort:

(1) **Ask yourself: is it really a mistake?**

(2) **Request a reference for the dubious assertion.**

(3) **Read the Talk page**

   perhaps the issue has been debated already

(4) **Explain your reasoning**

   in the edit summary and on the Talk page

How You Can Contribute

Even after today, there's help available!

Online volunteers, online tutorials, screencasts

Vast community

Contributions according to time and expertise

Read up on the NIH Welcome page

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Academy/NIH_2009/Welcome

Ideas for finding **your article**

Popular pages on the various WikiProjects

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject Molecular and Cellular Biology/Popular pages

Matt Titmus (Igor), Mr. Z-man (Popular pages), Cacycle (wikEd), Pyrospirit (article assessment)

Yet another reason for contributing