

Attributing Creative Commons Content

A guide

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Introduction to attribution at T.A.S.L

Attribution

The Wikimedia Foundation hosts a variety of content that is available under a [Creative Commons license](#) and is free to reuse, remix, and share on other platforms.

The guide below provides best practices and examples for how to attribute Creative Commons licensed content from Wikipedia and other Wikimedia projects in a variety of contexts – including small screens and voice assistants – in order to meet license attribution requirements, provide credit to our contributor community, and raise awareness of the open knowledge movement and ensure that it continues to flourish.

As technology continues to evolve, we plan to keep these materials updated to provide guidance on new formats and attribution considerations. If you are planning to reuse Creative Commons licensed content from Wikimedia projects and have more questions about attribution that are not covered in this guide, please feel free to contact us at partnerships@wikimedia.org.



Attributing Creative Commons Content

Who is this guide for? This guide is intended for anyone interested in reusing Wikimedia project content.

What is the purpose of this guide? To provide best practices for attributing Wikimedia's Creative Commons licensed content when you want to reuse it on other platforms. This is not meant to be general advice for how to attribute all Creative Commons license content in any situation. Instead, it is the Foundation's opinion on how content from **Wikimedia projects should be attributed in situations where it's unclear how or where to display the required attribution elements.**

What if I have more questions or need help? Feel free to reach out to us at partnerships@wikimedia.org



What is T.A.S.L?

“TASL” is an acronym that describes the required elements needed to properly attribute Creative Commons works. It stands for:



Title

The name of the work



Author

Who allows you to use the work?



Source

Where can people find the work?

Provide a link.



License

Under what terms can you use the work?



This is an ideal attribution

"Creative Commons 10th Birthday Celebration San Francisco" by tvol is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Because:

Title? "Creative Commons 10th Birthday Celebration San Francisco"

Author? "tvol" - linked to his profile page

Source? "Creative Commons 10th Birthday Celebration San Francisco" - linked to original Flickr page

License? "CC BY 2.0" - linked to license deed



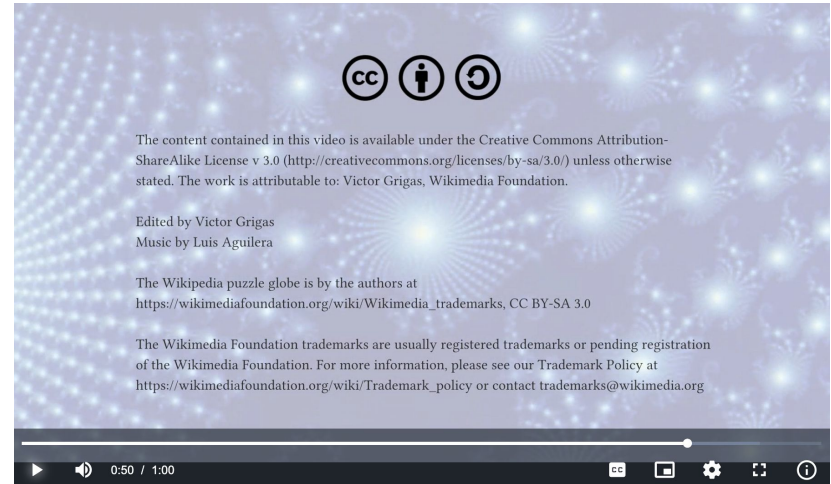
For more information on TASL requirements and examples (including the above example), please read https://wiki.creativecommons.org/wiki/best_practices_for_attribution.

Where do you need to include these TASL elements?

The location these elements are presented to the end-user must be **“reasonable to the medium.”** We recommend adding TASL elements **close in both space and time to when the work is reused.** Examples of “reasonable to the medium” attribution include:



A clickable link on a website.

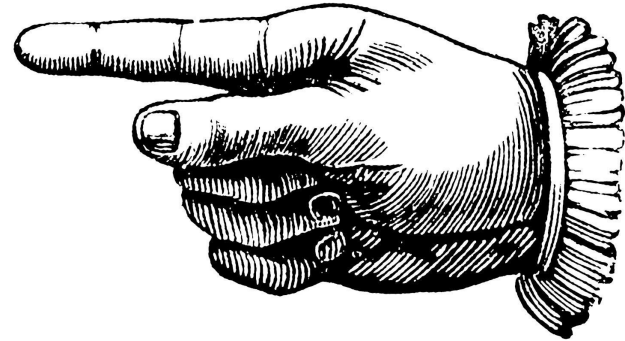


A credits page on a documentary video.

What should I prioritize if I can't fit all elements close in space and time to the work?

This question sometimes arise when reusing content on small screens or in audio-only contexts.

We've provided the following "order of importance" as a suggestion when you're in doubt:



Order of importance of the required elements*

* All elements are required, but in some situations, these elements may not be able to be presented in the same space or at the same time as the work being reused



Source (with link)



Author



License



Title



1. Source should typically be prioritized

- If you provide the name of the project where the original information resides (e.g., Wikipedia) WITH a link to the original project page, then the user may be able to find the rest of the required elements on the project page.
- When citing the text of Wikipedia articles: “Wikipedia” may be considered the source and the URL to the original Wikipedia page may be a reasonable means to cite the author
- Keep in mind that Wikimedia has the link shortener at w.wiki. Source URLs are sometimes difficult to fit into a short citation. The w.wiki link shortener might be able to help with unwieldy links.



2. If you cannot link the end-user back to the original page, "author" might be the highest priority

- Since one of the most important reasons for attribution is to allow the user to find the original version and understand who created it, the source may sometimes not be as helpful as the author.
- Since there are hundreds of thousands of images on Wikimedia Commons, the source might not be as helpful as including the name of the photographer, "Jane Smith" (the "author"), since Jane Smith may have only contributed a few images to Wikimedia Commons.





3. Title may be least important

- Titles are often long and unwieldy. They might be the most difficult to integrate fully with limited space.
- Some titles aren't helpful in identifying the work. For example, an image might have a nondescript title or a title that is a string of letters/numbers rather than a human-readable name.
- Assuming that you provide the source with a URL to the original work, the work's title might be self-evident to any user who navigates to the original page.

This should not be generalized for non-Wikimedia projects

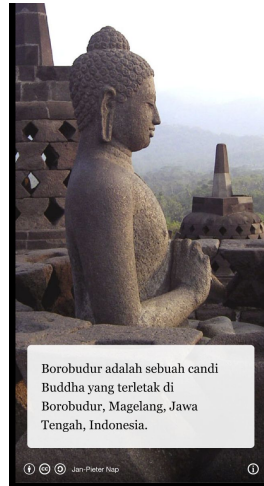
Keep in mind that the order of importance represents the Foundation's opinion for how to best lead users back to attribution information for Wikimedia project content. This is not a general statement about the "order of importance" of elements more generally across the entire Creative Commons ecosystem.



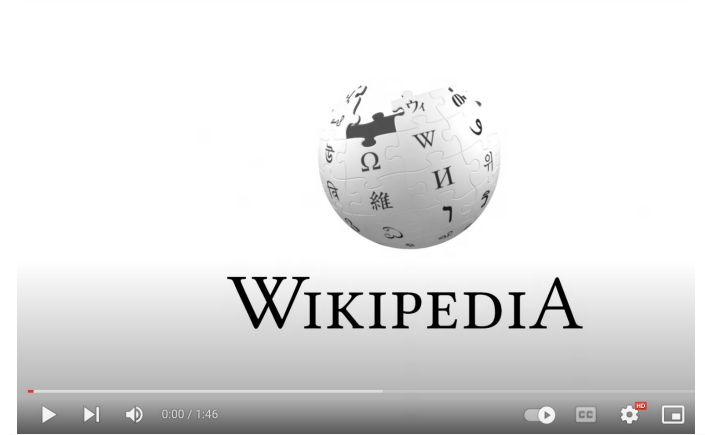
Try to provide a clickable **Source** URL whenever possible.



Clickable link on a website



Clickable “info” icon link



URL in YouTube description

**When citing media (e.g. photos):
the “name of the individual
contributor” is the **Author** &
“Wikipedia” is the **Source****



When citing the text of Wikipedia articles: “Wikipedia” may be considered the source and it's reasonable to link to the page to see its authorship.

Miriam Makeba

South African singer and civil rights activist

Zenzile Miriam Makeba (4 March

1932 – 9 November 2008), nicknamed

Mama Africa, was a South African singer, songwriter, actress, and civil rights activist.

Associated with musical genres including Afropop, jazz, and world music, she was an advocate against apartheid and white-minority government in South Africa.

Quick Facts Born, Died ...



Miriam Makeba and Dizzy Gillespie in concert, Deauville (Calvados, France).

Roland Godefroy - Own work

CC BY 3.0
File: Miriam Makeba10.JPG

2

For individual media, you should consider the author to be the individual contributor who created the work. The Author is NOT the project itself (e.g., not “Wikimedia Commons”). It is also not always the user that uploaded the work.

File:Miriam Makeba10.JPG

File Discussion



Size of this preview: 800 × 548 pixels. Other resolutions: 320 × 219 pixels | 640 × 439 pixels | 1,024 × 702 pixels | 1,280 × 877 pixels | 2,560 × 1,754 pixels | 3,634 × 2,490 pixels.

Original file (3,634 × 2,490 pixels, file size: 1.01 MB, MIME type: image/jpeg)

Summary

Description English: Miriam Makeba and Dizzy Gillespie in concert, Deauville (Calvados, France). Français : Miriam Makeba et Dizzy Gillespie en concert à Deauville (Calvados, France).

Date 20 July 1991

Source Own work

Author Roland Godefroy

Licensing



This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license.

You are free:

- to share – to copy, distribute and transmit the work

- to remix – to adapt the work

Under the following conditions:

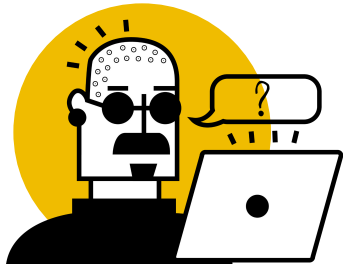
- attribution – You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may

3

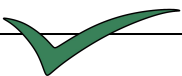
The “more details” page (i.e., this page https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Miriam_Makeba10.JPG) related to a photo of Miriam Makeba and Dizzy Gillespie) includes attribution information as well as the provenance of where the media came from before being included in Wikipedia (in this case, Flickr).

1

Frequently asked questions



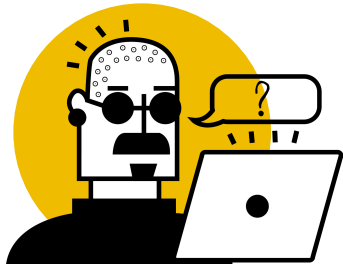
Do I have to include the license version number (e.g. 4.0)?



Yes! Each version number represents different licensing terms and is important to include.

In cases where this is not possible, it may be more reasonable to exclude it, if you provide a link to the source where the licensing terms can be found.





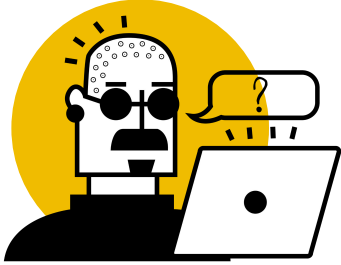
Should I include a link URL to the Creative Commons license document itself?



You should consider this as a best practice. It is preferred that you link to the human-readable summary of the license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>).

In cases where linking is not possible, please include the license name without the URL.





Should I include the full license name or just a shortening of it?

No preference.

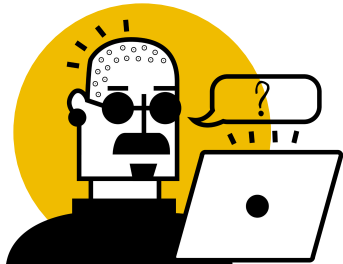
For example, we have no preference between:

"10th Birthday Celebration" by tvol is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0

and

"10th Birthday Celebration" by tvol / CC BY 4.0





Should I use the license text (e.g., CC-By-SA 4.0) or the CC icons?



No preference, although it is always helpful to think about using attribution techniques that are machine readable (easy to index by search), accessible (to differently-abled users), and quick loading (for maximum usability across tech setups worldwide).

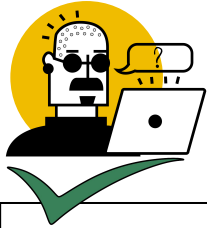
Consider using icons when space is limited and accompanying them with alt-text for accessibility purposes.

Resources

You can find the visual CC icons at this link:

<https://creativecommons.org/about/downloads>





Do I have to attribute in audio formats like voice assistants?

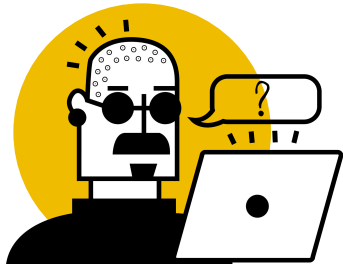
Yes!

Voice assistants without screens (e.g., smart speakers) should use the [Wikimedia sound logo](#) and attribute the source of information coming from our projects (“According to Wikipedia...” / “Wikipedia says...”)

Voice assistants with screens (e.g. in-car dashboard screens), should use the [Wikimedia sound logo](#) and follow all CC attribution guidelines directly on screen or within a connected app that saves the user’s search history for later review.

- A.** if the screen has a browser, the product should have a link to the URL of the original page or one that contains full attribution and access to the original page
- B.** if it doesn’t have a browser, the product should provide enough information for a reader or listener to navigate to the original page that contains the attribution. This may include the article title (if human readable) as well as source/author (generally “Wikipedia” for Wikipedia articles).
- C.** Assistants with screens that are small that can’t support much text can – for example – put that information into a shortlink (using our shortlink creation tool: <https://w.wiki/>)
- D.** Assistants with small screens that don’t have a browser may even put that information into a QR code.





What if TASL doesn't apply to my use-case?



Talk to us!

The most-up-to-date licenses (currently the 4.0 suite) as well as the most up to date guidance from the Creative Commons organization (https://wiki.creativecommons.org/wiki/best_practices_for_attribution) (last edited in 2018) may not account for new technology and new norms of media consumption. Generally, the further away one gets from reusing text works on a website displayed on a desktop computer, the more likely it is that TASL will become difficult to interpret.

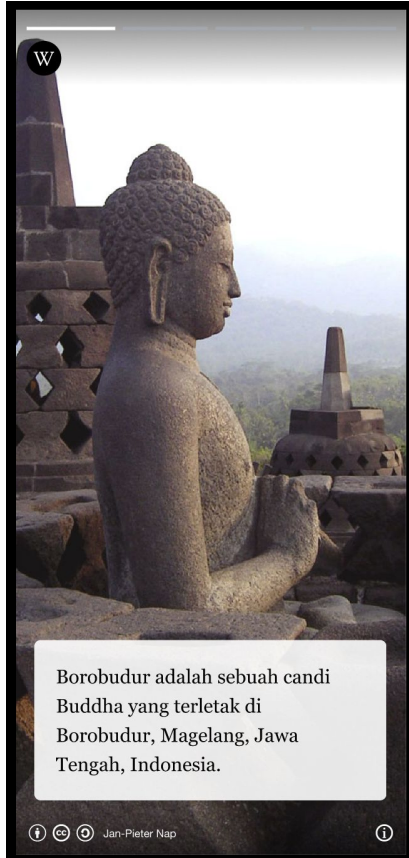
In cases where there are gray areas, please reach out to us at partnerships@wikimedia.org.



Case studies: attribution on small screens



Case study 1: Small Screens



Attributes:

- **Title:** None
- **Author:** Image author
- **Source:** Text: Project logo; Image: Project name
- **License:** CC-BY-SA icons or text with link to license
- **Path to source content:** Tap logos/wordmarks to go to article and/or file page

Example: [WikiStories](#) prototype

Case study 1: Small Screens

What this example **does well...**

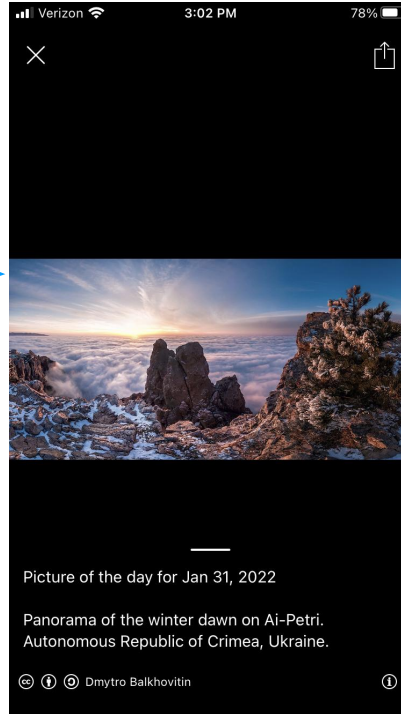
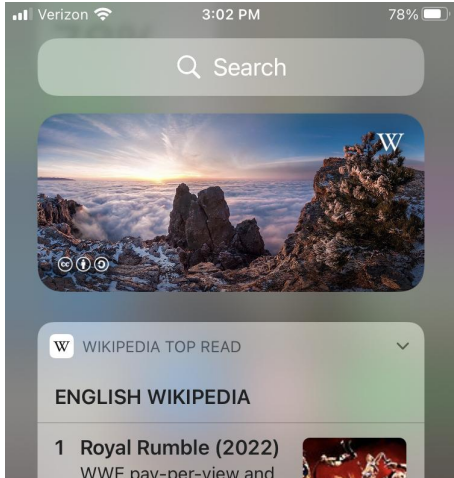
- Directly attributed “Jan-Pieter Nap” as the author of the photo itself (rather than Wikimedia Commons or Wikivoyage, where the photo may have come from).
- Original article gets linked back to, even without a standard text URL.
- Title is omitted to save space but is accessible via the link to the original work.

How this example **could be improved...**

- Could consider a “credits” page on click/tap/mouse-over as part of the “i” icon that shows full TASL (missing title).



Case study 2: Small Screens



Attributes:

- **Title:** None
- **Author:** Image author on clickthrough
- **Source:** Project logo/wordmark
- **License:** CC BY-SA icons or text with link to license
- **Path to source content:** Tap on image to go to file page on Commons

Example: [WMF iOS app homescreen widget](#)

Case study 2: Small Screens

What this example **does well...**

- Although a title and author was not included directly, these elements are provided on a secondary page that viewers can access with only one tap.
 - This follows our general rule that the URL pointing back to the original page is important.
 - Although it does not use the text “Wikipedia” to show the source, it nevertheless uses a popular Wikipedia trademark – the stylized W – to denote the source.

How this example **could be improved...**

- The symbols specify the kind of license (Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike), but they don't specify version number of the license. Users can determine the version number of the CC license by clicking into the original page to read the image credits.
- That said, since Commons images are licensed under a variety of licenses, there's room to be more creative about including the version number closer in time and space to the image in future user-interface designs.



Attribution Guidelines for Generative AI Using Wikimedia Data

We request that AI tools identify Wikimedia content as specifically as possible.

This allows users to verify information by directly accessing the original Wikimedia source.

The following slides offer best practices for attributing Wikimedia's Creative Commons licensed content when you want to reuse it on other platforms in 4 common instances.



We encourage re-users to use the TASL framework

In instances where it is difficult to include all four, 'Source' and 'Path to source' should be prioritised



Title

The name of the work



Author

Who allows you to use the work?



Source

Where can people find the work?

Provide a link.



License

Under what terms can you use the work?

Wikipedia favicons are good visual tools for content identification

W Favicons: The Wikipedia 'W' icon is a distinctive graphic element derived from the W of Wikipedia, set in the font Hoefler combined with various framing devices.



W Wordmark: The distinctive wordmark, with larger case W and A characters. The wordmark alone is the most identifiable and clearly understood version of all of the official marks representing Wikipedia. When both the puzzle globe and wordmark (the unified mark) cannot be used, it is preferable to use the Wikipedia wordmark to clearly identify Wikipedia.



Puzzle Globe Favicons: The Wikipedia puzzle icon is a distinctive graphic element extracted directly from the original 3D puzzle globe model



All logo assets and guidance can be found on the [Wikipedia](#) and [Wikimedia](#) Brand portals. Wikipedia favicons can be found on [Wikimedia Commons](#).

Other Wikimedia Favicons

Wikimedia Roundel and Logotype: Originally designed in 2005 by Neolux, the mark that identifies the Wikimedia movement and its knowledge projects. It consists of a circular logo and a wordmark. The mark is intended to signify a character holding an open book. The font, Montserrat, is used to construct both the title and the descriptor of the mark.



WIKIMEDIA



All logo assets and guidance can be found on the [Wikipedia](#) and [Wikimedia](#) Brand portals. Wikipedia favicons can be found on [Wikimedia Commons](#).

AI powered search results entirely made up of Wikipedia/Wikimedia content



Source: Project name in text and/or project logo &

Path to source content: Tap hyperlinked source text and/or project logo to go to article and/or file page



Title: Article Title

Microsoft - Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft>

< Corporate Identity **Licensing arrangements fo...** See also Extern: >

The Microsoft Services Provider License Agreement, or SPLA, is a mechanism by which service providers and independent software vendors (ISVs), who license Microsoft products on a monthly basis, are able to provide software services and hosting services to end-users. The SPLA can be customized to suit the solution being offered and the customers using it.

[Wikipedia](#) · Text under [CC-BY-SA licence](#)



License: CC-BY-SA icons or text with link to license



Author: For projects like Wikipedia, sometimes "Wikipedia" may act as both the author and the source. Therefore, including the source may imply the author as well.

When Wikipedia is used to verify other websites in search results

Who We Are
Oxfam South Africa – A history of advocating for justice in South Africa. As...

Photo Gallery
Photo Gallery - Contact Us - Oxfam South Africa

Contact us | Oxfam International
Visit this page on Oxfam

About this website
Oxfam is a British founded confederation of 21 independent charitable organizations focusing on the alleviation of global poverty, founded in 1942 and led by Oxfam International. [Wikipedia](#)
<https://www.oxfam.org/en/contact-us> Text under CC-BY-SA licence

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Moscow: Oxfam International Advocacy Office

New York: Oxfam International Advocacy

Explore more



Source: Text:
Project Logo
Favicon; Image:
Project name
&

Path to source content: Tap logos/wordmarks/ thumbnails to go to article and/or file page



License:
CC-BY-SA icons or text
with link to license




AI powered chat outputs using Wikipedia/ Wikimedia content only



Source: Text:
Project Logo
Favicon; Image:
Project name
&

**Path to source
content:** Tap
logos/wordmarks/
thumbnails to go
to article and/or
file page


MM what is the capital of Djibouti

 Used Wikipedia UNVERIFIED

The capital of Djibouti is Djibouti City. It is the largest city in the country and serves as the administrative and commercial center of the Republic of Djibouti. The city is located in the coastal Djibouti Region on the Gulf of Tadjoura. Djibouti City has a population of around 600,000 inhabitants, which accounts for over half of the country's population. The city was founded in 1888 by the French, on land leased from the ruling Somali and Afar Sultans. Since Djibouti's independence in 1977, Djibouti City has continued to serve as the nation's capital.

For more detailed information, you can visit the [Wikipedia page on Djibouti City](#).

This answer is based on content from [Wikipedia](#), a free encyclopedia made by volunteers and available under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License](#). Please note that, as a large language model, I may not have summarized Wikipedia accurately.



Djibouti City - Wikipedia
wikipedia.org

wikipedia.org

creativecommons.org



Title:
Article Title



Author:
Text: "based on content from
Wikipedia, a free encyclopedia
made by volunteers"



License:
CC-BY-SA icons or text
with link to license



AI powered chat outputs that include excerpts from Wikipedia/Wikimedia content



Source: Text:
Project Logo
Favicon; Image:
Project name
&

Path to source content: Tap logos/wordmarks/ thumbnails to go to article and/or file page

when and why did the protestant reformation begin?

✓ Searching for: **protestant reformation**

✓ Generating answers for you...

The Protestant Reformation began in **1517** when a German monk named **Martin Luther** posted his **95 Theses** on a church door in Wittenberg¹. He criticized some practices and doctrines of the Catholic Church, such as the selling of indulgences and the authority of the pope². His ideas sparked a movement that challenged the religious and political power of the Church and led to the emergence of various Protestant denominations³.

Learn more: [1. en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org) [2. nationalgeographic.org](https://nationalgeographic.org) [3. worldhistory.org](https://worldhistory.org) [4. history.com](https://history.com)

? What were some of the effects of the Reformation? Who were some other important figures in the Reformation?

Ask me anything...

0/2000





Contact the Wikimedia Foundation brand and trademarks team to collaborate on a bespoke solution.

Trademarks@wikimedia.org



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FOUNDATION