

# Contributing to Wikipedia



**A guide to editing articles in Wikipedia**

I use Wikipedia all the time. My name is Andrienne. Let's do this together and change the world.



DRAFT: 29 OCT 13

Imagine a world in which every single human being can freely share in the sum of all knowledge.

This guide will introduce you to the world of contributing to Wikipedia.

Over 100,000 people around the world have played a part in making Wikipedia what it is: the greatest collection of human knowledge in the history of the planet.

Let's get started!

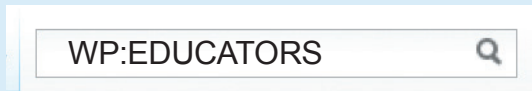
## Understanding icons we use



### Handouts

Throughout this brochure, we'll reference handouts you should pass out to your students. All of these handouts are linked from the web version of this brochure:

<http://education.wikimedia.org/syllabus>



### Shortcuts

Shortcuts to important pages on Wikipedia are listed throughout this syllabus as | *shortcut* WP:EDUCATORS

To use one, simply type the shortcut into the search bar on Wikipedia and press enter.



### Milestones

Experienced instructors say it is crucial for students who are going to be editing Wikipedia to become comfortable not only with the markup, but also the community. Requiring milestones throughout the term will acclimate students to the site and head off procrastination. Instructors who do not set up these milestones throughout the term usually have bad experiences with their assignments.

## How does Wikipedia work?

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Free means freely shared. And every bit helps.



# How did this happen?

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The screenshot shows a Wikipedia article page. At the top, there are navigation links: 'Article', 'Talk', 'Read', 'Edit', 'View history', and a search box. The article title is 'An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump'. Below the title, it says 'From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia'. The main text of the article is visible, starting with 'An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump is a 1768 oil-on-canvas painting by Joseph Wright of Derby, one of a number of candlelit scenes that Wright painted during the 1760s. The painting departed from convention of the time by depicting a scientific subject in the reverential manner formerly reserved for scenes of historical or religious significance. Wright was intimately involved in depicting the Industrial Revolution and the scientific advances of the Enlightenment, but while his paintings were recognised as something out of the ordinary by his contemporaries, his provincial status and choice of subjects meant the style was never widely imitated. The picture has been owned by the National Gallery, London since 1863 and is still regarded as a masterpiece of British art. The painting depicts a natural philosopher, a forerunner of the modern scientist, recreating one of Robert Boyle's air pump experiments, in which a bird is deprived of air, before a varied group of onlookers. The group exhibits a variety of reactions, but for most of the audience scientific curiosity overcomes concern for the bird. The central figure looks out of the picture as if inviting the viewer's participation in the outcome.'

There is a table of contents on the left side of the article, listing sections like 'Historical background', 'Painting', 'Reception', etc. There is also a metadata box on the right side of the article, listing 'Artist: Joseph Wright of Derby', 'Year: 1768', 'Type: Oil-on-canvas', 'Dimensions: 183 cm x 244 cm (72 in x 94 1/2 in)', and 'Location: National Gallery, London, England'. There is a small image of the painting 'An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump' and a small image of the title page of Robert Boyle's 'New Experiments of 1660'. There is also a quote from the article: '... the Bird for a while appear'd lively enough: but upon a greater Exsuction of the Air, she began manifestly to droop and appear sick, and very soon after was taken with as violent and irregular Convulsions, as are wont to be observ'd in Poultry, when their heads are wrung off: For the Bird threw her self over and over two or three times, and dyed with her Breast upward, and her Head downwards, and her Neck awry.'

Look familiar? Our pages are famous that way.



## Contributing

When people work together



Illustrator  
Visual aids rock.

Mediator  
Live in peace!

Author  
Provides the words

Formatter  
Does wiki markup

Copyeditor  
Improves wording

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## Before you edit

Key policies to keep Wikipedia as reliable and useful as possible

### Neutral point of view

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### Free content

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### Reliable sources

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### Notability

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### Good faith

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These policies work in life too, ya know?





# The structure of an article

What people view as this

This  
Ut doluptatur

This  
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This  
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This  
Ut doluptatur

# Wikicode

Actually starts looking like this

That  
Ut doluptatur

That  
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That  
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This screenshot shows the full structure of a Wikipedia article. It includes a top navigation bar with user options, a search bar, and a toolbar with editing tools. The article title is "An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump". Below the title is a lead section, followed by a section titled "Historical background" which contains several paragraphs of text. There is also an image of the painting and a small inset image of a historical document. The page is annotated with four blue arrows pointing to the top of the article content area, labeled "This Ut doluptatur".

This screenshot shows the Wikipedia editing interface. At the top, it says "Editing An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump". Below this is a warning message: "Content that violates any copyrights will be deleted. Encyclopedic content must be verifiable. Work submitted to Wikipedia can be edited, used, and redistributed—by anyone—subject to certain terms and conditions." The main editing area contains a code editor with Wikicode for the article's lead and a metadata table. Below the code editor is a "Cite your sources" section and a "Save page" button. The page is annotated with three blue arrows pointing to the top of the editing area, labeled "That Ut doluptatur".

# Adding content step-by-step

Simple as 1-2-3

This screenshot shows the Wikipedia editing interface for the article "Three Persons Viewing the Gladiator by Candlelight". The page is in "Preview" mode, as indicated by the red text at the top: "This is only a preview; your changes have not yet been saved!". The article content is displayed in a clean, readable format with a central image of the painting and its caption. The editing tools are visible at the bottom of the page, including an "Insert" menu, an "Edit summary" field, and "Save page", "Show preview", and "Show changes" buttons. The page also includes a "Templates used in this preview" section and a "Parser profiling data" section.

This screenshot shows the same Wikipedia editing interface for the article "Three Persons Viewing the Gladiator by Candlelight", but in "Source" view. The article content is displayed as raw HTML and wikitext code, including file names, templates, and formatting tags. The editing tools at the bottom are the same as in the preview view, but the "Edit summary" field is empty. The page also includes a "Pages transcluded onto the current version of this page" section and a "Privacy policy" section.

This looks harder than it is.



# Interacting with the community

Get ready to rumble!

Special page

Joseph Wright of Derby [Talk](#) [Sandbox](#) [Preferences](#) [Watchlist](#) [Contributions](#) [Log out](#)

## Welcome to Wikipedia, Joseph Wright of Derby!

Looking for an easy way to get involved? Just choose one of the three options below, and we'll give you a suggested article to edit.

- Fix Spelling & Grammar**  
The easiest way to get started!
- Improve Clarity**  
Simplify or reword sentences.
- Add Links**  
Connect Wikipedia articles together.

[← No thanks, return to the page I was reading](#)

[Privacy policy](#) [About Wikipedia](#) [Disclaimers](#) [Contact Wikipedia](#) [Developers](#)

User page [Talk](#)

Joseph Wright of Derby [Talk](#) [Sandbox](#) [Preferences](#) [Watchlist](#) [Contributions](#) [Log out](#)

## User:Joseph Wright of Derby

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

I'm Joseph, from Derby, England. I'm a painter in my day job, and I know a lot about making ceramics. I'm also really into science, especially physics and astronomy. I like the idea of Wikipedia as a way to spread Enlightenment throughout the world!

I'm going to be working on these articles:

- Ortery
- Air pump

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# Politeness happens

To those who pay attention

Article [Talk](#)

Joseph Wright of Derby [Talk](#) [Sandbox](#) [Preferences](#) [Watchlist](#) [Contributions](#) [Log out](#)

## Air pump

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

An **air pump** is a device for pushing air. Examples include a *bicycle pump* or *vacuum cleaner*; a *gas compressor* used to *power* a *pneumatic tool*; a *vacuum cleaner* to *encourage* a fire; a *vacuum cleaner* and a *vacuum pump*.

The first effective air pump constructed in England for scientific purposes was Boyle's.<sup>[1]</sup>

### References

- <sup>↑</sup> George Wilson (Jan 15th, 1849), "On the Early History of the Air-pump in England" *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*

*This engineering-related article is a stub. You can help Wikipedia by expanding it.*

**Categories:** [Pumps](#) | [Engineering stubs](#)

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### Notifications

- Sage Ross (WMF) mentioned you on Sage Ross (WMF)/sandbox talk page in "Thanks".  
13 seconds ago | [View changes](#)
- Welcome to Wikipedia, Joseph Wright of Derby! We're glad you're here.  
9 minutes ago

[All notifications](#) [Preferences](#)

Sharing appreciation is one practice of etiquette.



## Any questions?

You know you got 'em!

## For further information

Who knew?

Because you can't find everything  
in the Yellow Pages.



## The techniques of wiki markup

Instructions that change everything

Instructions

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# Glossary

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