

# Simple ways to get started with Wikipedia

OER enthusiasts would do well to learn about Wikipedia's collaboration and reuse practices, and the best ways to get learn involve using the site interactively. Here are a few tips on how to get started. Join us to explore these activities in the "Wikipedia Hackathon" session Thursday afternoon!

## Create an account

No account is required to write or edit Wikipedia articles, but there are big advantages -- even if you don't plan to make edits! A major benefit: you need an account to create a watchlist, which enables you to track activity on articles of interest. This starting point will help you choose your username: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WIKISOO/Create\\_an\\_account](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WIKISOO/Create_an_account)

## Create a user page

A Wikipedia user page is your way to express your identity to other Wikipedia users. What interests you about Wikipedia? What related projects have you worked on? What topics are you interested in improving?

## Add a few articles to your watchlist

Visit an article you are interested (for instance, "[open educational resources](#)") while you're logged in, and click the star in the upper right. Add 5-10 articles to your watchlist. Now, whenever you click "watchlist," you'll have an overview of recent editing activity and discussions related to these articles.

## Explore the "view history" tab of an article that interests you

Who has been editing the article, and what are they doing? Watch this video to get a feel for how the "view history" function works: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y45CQtdMK1w>  
For bonus points, explore the links at the top, which will help you find the most prolific editors of the article, the number of page views in the last month, etc.

## Explore the talk page of an article that interests you

When editors are seeking help in building an article -- or working through a disagreement -- they use the article's "talk page." Talk pages for minor topics (e.g., a local theater company) may be empty (or may just have some metadata about the article at the top); but more popular articles (e.g., [Barack Obama](#)) will have multiple extensive discussions. Read through a talk page to get a feel for how the Wikipedia community deliberates. This video provides a good overview: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BU5Ga\\_Yz8ZU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BU5Ga_Yz8ZU)

## Look at an “Articles for Deletion” discussion

Wikipedia doesn't allow an article on just anything. When somebody thinks an article's subject doesn't meet Wikipedia's standards, they open an “Articles for Deletion” (AFD) discussion. You can learn a lot about what Wikipedia values from reading about the AFD process ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Articles\\_for\\_deletion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Articles_for_deletion)), or by considering a current nomination ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:AfD\\_debates](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:AfD_debates)).

## Join a WikiProject

WikiProjects are pages devoted to improving articles in a certain topic area. Add your name to the main page, and check the talk page to see what people have been discussing. For bonus points, add a new discussion topic of your own! Try WikiProject Open (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:OPEN>), or browse for other topics ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject\\_Council/Directory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Council/Directory)). Keep in mind, many WikiProjects are “ghost towns” -- just because it exists, doesn't mean people are actively participating.

## Read/view materials from the Wikimedia Foundation's Education Program (international), or the Wiki Education Foundation (U.S./Canada)

International:

- <http://education.wikimedia.org>
- <http://outreach.wikimedia.org/wiki/Education/Countries>
- [http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/WMF\\_Metrics\\_and\\_activities\\_meetings/Quarterly\\_reviews/Grantmaking/January\\_2015\\_-2](http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/WMF_Metrics_and_activities_meetings/Quarterly_reviews/Grantmaking/January_2015_-2) (see slides 11-23)

US/Canada:

- <http://wikiedu.org>
- <http://wikiedu.org/webinar/>
- [contact@wikiedu.org](mailto:contact@wikiedu.org)

*This document in digital form: [www.wikistrategies.net/OER-wikipedia-getting-started](http://www.wikistrategies.net/OER-wikipedia-getting-started)*