

Danger signs

Check for warning signs, or 'template' messages at the top of the article or section, within an article, and in the 'discussion' tab (or 'talk page'), e.g.

 **The factual accuracy of this article is disputed.**
Please see the relevant discussion on the [talk page](#).

Good articles include a reference list attributing quotations to reliable sources. Check for any warnings about inadequate referencing, e.g.

 **This article does not cite any references or sources.**
Please help [improve this article](#) by adding citations to [reliable sources](#).
Unverifiable material may be challenged and removed.

 **This article or section may contain inappropriate or misinterpreted citations that do not verify the text.**
Please help [improve this article](#) by checking for inaccuracies. ([help](#), [talk](#), [get involved!](#))

There may also be warning messages within an article, e.g.

[\[citation needed\]](#) [\[verification needed\]](#) [\[unreliable source?\]](#) [\[not in citation given\]](#) [\[original research?\]](#)

Check for warnings that an article may be biased:

 **The neutrality of this section is disputed.**
Please see the discussion on the [talk page](#).
Please do not remove this message until the dispute is resolved.

Text: [\[opinion needs balancing\]](#) [\[neutrality disputed\]](#)

Check for disputes on the discussion or talk pages:

 **There is a dispute about this section and an editor has requested a third opinion.**
If you would like to contribute to the discussion, please see the [talk page](#).

Check the 'history' tab for evidence of vandalism, e.g. ('*remove vandalism*' or '*rvv vandalism*')

[article](#) [discussion](#) [view source](#) [history](#)
Check the history tab for evidence of vandalism or editing wars

Also, check for a history of 'editing wars' between two or more editors repeatedly undoing each other's edits, e.g. ('*revert*' or '*rvv*')

Good Articles

A small green cross  within a circle in the discussion tab indicates a **Good Article**.



The screenshot shows the 'Talk:Paul McCartney' page. The 'discussion' tab is selected, and a green cross icon is visible in the top right corner of the discussion tab. The page content includes a navigation menu, a search box, and a list of article policies.

Good articles have no obvious problems, are approaching the quality of a professional encyclopedia, and meet the good article criteria:

-  **well written** (following style guidelines)
-  **broad** (in scope)
-  **factually accurate**
-  **neutral** (unbiased and fair)
-  **stable** (not subject to editing wars)

However, the page you are viewing may have changed since it was judged a "Good Article". It may have been vandalised:

-  Deleting accurate information
-  Inserting false information

[article](#) [discussion](#) [edit this page](#) [history](#)
Open the history tab to view an earlier version of the article

You can easily view earlier versions of the page by going to the 'history' tab and selecting a date and time (you can also compare any previous version of the page to the current version).

This is an [old revision](#) of this page, as edited by ... at...
It may differ significantly from [the current revision](#).

If you have a Wikipedia account, you can revert or rollback the page to restore it to the earlier version.

 **Former Good Articles** are those that no longer meet the Good Article criteria.

Featured Articles

A small bronze star  in the top right corner indicates a **Featured Article**.



The screenshot shows the 'Thoughts on the Education of Daughters' page. A bronze star icon is visible in the top right corner of the page. The page content includes a navigation menu, a search box, and a list of article policies.

Featured articles support their claims with specific evidence and external citations in a **reference list** or **bibliography**. These articles have been reviewed by Wikipedia's editors and were found to meet the featured article criteria:

-  **professionally written**
-  **comprehensive** (in scope)
-  **factually accurate**
-  **neutral** (unbiased and fair)
-  **stable** (not subject to editing wars)

The **discussion** tab includes further information:



The screenshot shows the 'discussion' tab for the 'Thoughts on the Education of Daughters' page. A bronze star icon is visible in the top right corner of the discussion tab. The page content includes a navigation menu, a search box, and a list of article policies.

Remember that even Featured Articles can quickly change (or be vandalised), so always verify the information against a reputable source.

 **Former Featured Articles** are those that no longer meet the Featured Article criteria.



Wikipedia: Academic Use

Wikipedia (like any encyclopedia), is a great **starting point** for research, helping you to:

- Get a general understanding of a topic.
- Identify keywords and search terms.
- Gather bibliographic references to locate other sources of information.

But it should **not** be cited as a source in itself. Use the reference lists in the Wikipedia article to:

- Find a reputable source that you can cite.
- Locate (and read) the cited reference sources to check whether they really:
 - a) exist; and
 - b) support the article.

Remember, Wikipedia (like any encyclopedia) is only a **starting point**, and should **not** be the only source that you consult for information. Unlike traditional encyclopedias:

- Wikipedia is a wiki, which means that **anyone can edit** or **vandalise** an article.

Use your judgement to evaluate all sources. The quality of Wikipedia content varies. Wikipedia has a colour-coded quality rating scale to help you evaluate an article:

FA	Featured Articles
A	A-Class Articles
GA	Good Articles
B	B-Class Articles
C	C-Class Articles
Start	Start-Class Articles
Stub	Stub-Class Articles

Open the discussion tab to check the quality rating of an article

This article has been **rated** as **B-Class** on the Project's [quality scale](#).
 (If you rated the article please give a short summary at [comments](#) to explain the ratings and/or to identify the strengths and weaknesses.)



This handout in a nutshell

You should not use only Wikipedia for your research. Wikipedia is a great starting point, but there are a number of good reasons why you shouldn't cite it in your bibliography:

- Wikipedia is an encyclopedia
- Wiki content can be modified at any time

Instead, you can use Wikipedia to:

- Get a basic understanding of a topic
- Identify more keywords and search terms
- Find additional sources of information on your topic (reliable sources that you *can* cite in your bibliography or reference list).

Further Reading:

Wikipedia includes more information about:

- Wikipedia:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:About>
- Researching with Wikipedia
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Researching_with_Wikipedia
- Wikipedia's Assessment Criteria:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:ASSESS>
- Good Articles in Wikipedia:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:GA>
- Featured Articles in Wikipedia:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:FA>

More guides on evaluating Wikipedia articles:

- How to evaluate a Wikipedia article:
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/1/16/How_to_evaluate_a_Wikipedia_article.pdf
- Cumbrowski, Carsten. "Wikipedia Article Quality Assessment and Ranking Tips for Users and Search Engine Engineers." *Search Engine Journal* (22 Nov. 2007).
<http://www.searchenginejournal.com>

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WHY NOT WIKIPEDIA?

The Library Guide to The Free Encyclopedia

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www.otago.ac.nz/library

