

Writing for the world: Wikipedia assignment

Part I due February 1st Part II due March 1st Part III due March 22nd

In this assignment you will plan, prepare, and submit a modest contribution to Wikipedia. Wikipedia depends on volunteer contributors not just for completely new articles or major additions to old articles, but also to reorganize, add references, check spelling and formatting, of existing articles.

My aim is for you to contribute a significant but limited (about 9 hours of work, I estimate) improvement to Wikipedia. Your work breaks down into three parts, which are due at different points during the semester.

Part I: get registered and look around \approx 2 hour due February 1st, 11:59 p.m.

To be part of Wikipedia, you'll need to **register** as a contributor, **look over** some of the small projects needing work under **Help Out** in the Community Portal, and propose a few you'd like to work on. You should consider areas that you are somewhat familiar with, but there's no need to be an expert.

Submit your proposal as a PDF file `wikiI.pdf` to MarkUs. Your proposal will include your userid, e.g. Bertholtbrecht (this one may already be taken) and links to the Wikipedia pages for articles you might want to work on. You must continue working with the same userid for all three parts of this assignment.

The deadline for part I is 11:59 p.m., Friday February 1st.

Part II: preparing a plan \approx 3 hours due March 1st, 11:59 p.m.

Using the feedback from part I you'll be able to select a work-needing project from the **Help out** section of Wikipedia English's **Community Portal**. Before actually changing Wikipedia, you'll need to learn about the culture and practices of the Wikipedia community.

Each of the sections needing help under the Community Portal's **Help out** section has a link called **Learn how**. You need to consult this to find out about Wikipedia conventions for formatting, spelling, and grammar, as well as more general principles that go by acronyms such as NOR, NPOV, or even V. If you aim to consult, and quote, other sources, that should also be part of your plan. It's often good to consult the Wikipedia community, so your plan may involve consulting the talk page for your chosen project.

Your plan must be written down as a PDF document `wikiII.pdf` and submitted to MarkUs. The body of your plan should consist of a description of your plan for contributing to one of the projects listed under **Help out**, and it should make clear what you've learned about Wikipedia practices in reading one or more **Learn more** links.

Your submission must be received by 11:59 p.m., Friday March 1st.

Part III: making change \approx 4 hours due March 22nd, 11:59 p.m.

Using the evaluation from Part II you should be ready to make some modest, but useful change to Wikipedia. You may have already created a sandbox example, i.e. a proof-of-concept that doesn't actually change Wikipedia. You should consult other Wikipedians that are interested in the project, and let them know your plans. This may involve modifying your plan slightly, but that's the spirit of Wikipedia.

Please note that we don't grade you based on the reaction of the Wikipedia community. It is possible that you carry out an excellent plan, but your work is deleted by some member of the Wikipedia community. You will be graded based on the merits of your work, which we will judge based on the log files of any pages you change (we can look back and compare old versions, just as with any Wikipedia page).

You must submit `wikiIII.pdf` to MarkUs, a PDF document containing one thing: your Wikipedia userid. This should be the same userid as you submitted in part I, but submitting it has the effect of creating a page in MarkUs for your TA to give you feedback. We'll check out the work done by your userid by March 22nd, and evaluate that.

`wikiIII.pdf` must be submitted by 11:59 p.m., Friday March 22nd.

Writing Centre

If you'd like advice on writing, the University provides [Writing Centre](#) help for our students. You should seek out their advice in this, any other course where it's needed.