

Wikipedia

Instructors: The purpose of this exploratory activity is to acquaint students with Wikipedia, and how the content within is edited and presented to users. These activities can be used in-class, or as a take-home assignment. Encourage small group reflections about the questions. Please see below for the assignment instructions:

Assignment Objective(s):

- a. Locate the features of Wikipedia “front end.”
- b. Identify the editing process and other features that are “behind the scenes”
- c. Demonstrate what implications this site has for information literacy.

Instructions

Go to the Wikipedia homepage, and list the number of articles available in Polski (the Polish language):

Conduct a search for David Attenborough (in English). List the major page divisions (*Hint:* Start with ‘Early life and family’ ...):

Does this page have references? If so, list the tenth (10th) and twentieth (20th) reference. (*Note:* You are welcome to copy and paste, or give the URL to a screenshot).

Scroll to the very bottom of the page, until you reach the section entitled 'Categories.' Answer the following questions:

What is the purpose of these categories?

All of these categories are hyperlinked. Click on one and provide the name of the resulting page:

When was the David Attenborough page – not the overall site – last updated? (Hint: Look below the Categories).

Time take a look at Wikipedia behinds. At the top of the Attenborough article, click on 'View Source,' and answer the following questions:

Under what conditions can you edit a Wikipedia document?

Look at the Protection Log. Has someone tried to vandalize the Attenborough page in the past? When?

Return to the top, and click 'View History.' Provide a short list of all edits made in February 2014. Give the times, dates, and user IDs.

Can you find out more information about the editors? Does this information appear to be mandatory (i.e., are editors required to provide information about themselves)? Be sure to examine all the hyperlinks...

Final Question: Take a moment and think about what Wikipedia offers to students like you. Based on what you discovered during this assignment, list some advantages and disadvantages of using the site: