

VERIFY A WIKIPEDIA ENTRY

Assignment: In this assignment, students will be asked to discover whether the information found in a Wikipedia entry on a class-related topic is accurate. They will be called upon to search a number of resources, including websites and reference books. Students should keep track of the resources they consult and should provide a bibliography; additionally, they should cite all information properly in papers or presentations. This assignment will bring up complex information issues in a broader context, particularly once the students complete the assignment and discuss their process of trying to verify facts.

Preparation: Before presenting this assignment, you will need to find Wikipedia articles that on topics you would like your students to explore. You can either assign each student an entry, or you can divide students into groups. Some Wikipedia articles are long, so be aware that verifying all of that information may require some time and effort.

What to expect in the library session: During the library session, the librarian will introduce students to print and online reference collections, like Credo Reference or specialized print reference books. The librarian is likely to engage students in a discussion about evaluating online resources, particularly sources such as Wikipedia or blogs. The librarian is also likely bring up the notion of reliability, pointing out that one accurate Wikipedia articles does not mean that the site is necessarily reliable in full.

Tips, suggestions and warnings: It may take longer for students to complete this assignment than it might first appear, depending on how much information needs to be verified inside the Wikipedia article. You may find that students prefer to work on this project as a group because they can divide up components of the article. Be prepared to discover that the Wikipedia article may be completely accurate or that there may be pieces of information that can neither be confirmed or denied. Students might need to be made aware that they will not be penalized if they can't verify all the information in the entry.

Information Literacy Learning Outcomes: This assignment requires students to demonstrate proficiency in the following outcomes:

- Choose appropriate resources to search for relevant information
- Implement a variety of search strategies to find information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate resources critically
- Cite research in an appropriate documentation style