

Achieve 3000: Check the Facts

DAY 1

Define these words:

Cite

Dispute

Neutrality

Read the following source information:

Article: "Wikipedia: OK To Use?"

Wikipedia.org bills itself as "the free encyclopedia," the place where people all over the world can turn to when they want to learn about almost any subject. The news article challenges students to question whether it's a good idea to trust the information found in Wikipedia.

Comparison Chart: Wikipedia and Encyclopedia Britannica

Comparison charts are visual tools that students can use to organize and compare data. Students can use this chart to compare features of Wikipedia and Encyclopedia Britannica.

Infographic: Choosing the Best Online Sources

The Internet is a great resource, with countless Web sites, articles, and blogs available on any given topic. If students find a Web site that offers relevant information for a research topic, they should take care to investigate the sources to make sure the content is accurate and reliable. Choosing the Best Online Sources provides students with ways to confirm the reliability of online information.

Think about the following two claims.

"George Washington was the first president of the United States."

"...Editors do their best to make sure that the articles do not contain errors." (From source #2)

Both are presented as facts, but can they be verified? Certainly students can find abundant evidence that George Washington was our first president, but can they find sources to confirm that editors do their best to ensure accuracy?

Effective readers interrogate the text to evaluate the dependability of claims. Three important questions students should ask themselves are:

1. Why should I believe this?
2. Does the claim need evidence to support it, or can I use logic and my own background knowledge to confirm the information?
3. If evidence is presented, how reliable is it? Ask students to brainstorm additional questions that would help evaluate the credibility of a claim.

Complete the before reading poll.

DAY 2

Complete the reading, the T-chart organizer, and the activity.

Directions for the T-chart: fill out the top with the headings “believable” and “needs evidence.” As they read the three sources in the lesson, ask students to jot down a few examples of claims they find believable and those they think should to be confirmed with evidence.

DAY 3

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Part I:

1. Review your T-chart notes by sharing at least one example with the members in your group.
2. With each example explain your reasoning for placing your example in the column you chose.
3. Others in the group must ask one question of the member sharing about their example.

Part II:

1. How does the information in “Choosing the Best Online Sources” influence your understanding of “Wikipedia: OK to Use?”?
2. Refer to the chart that compares Wikipedia with *Encyclopedia Britannica*. How are Wikipedia and *Encyclopedia Britannica*’s missions reflected in their products?
3. Let’s say you were in a bind to complete an important research paper quickly for one of your classes. What would you do to find credible sources of information in a hurry? Would you consider using Wikipedia in a situation like this? Why or why not?

Wikipedia and *Encyclopedia Britannica*: Comparison Chart:

Suppose you have a research project to do for school. You've found that there are two general sources out there. One is Wikipedia, a Webbased encyclopedia founded in 2001 and written by the "by the people, for the people." The other is *Encyclopedia Britannica*, which is available in print or online. It's the oldest Englishlanguage encyclopedia still in use today, so your parents and grandparents probably used earlier editions.

	Wikipedia	<i>Encyclopedia Britannica</i>
Who Are the Contributors?	A group of volunteers. According to Wikipedia, its writers are usually people who have a great deal of interest in what they write about. Sometimes, they're experts in what they write about. These writers don't get paid.	A group of experts. These writers are scientists, professors, and others who know a great deal about a subject. These writers get paid for their work.
Who Checks the Articles?	Most Wikipedia articles are open, which means that anyone can edit them. A few are protected, which means that only administrators (people who run the site) can edit them. Wikipedia encourages experts to help edit articles to make sure they do not contain errors.	Articles on <i>Encyclopedia Britannica</i> are edited by a small group of professional editors. These editors do their best to make sure that the articles do not contain errors.
Who Reads It?	All of Wikipedia's articles are free to anyone who can get onto the Internet.	<i>Britannica's</i> printed encyclopedias are available to anyone who goes to a library. Some of <i>Britannica's</i> online articles are free, but most of them require a subscription. Only people who pay the subscription fee can see all of <i>Britannica's</i> online content.
What Is its Mission?	Wikipedia says it has two goals. One is to create a well-written, broad, and accurate source of information. The other is to provide this source to the public to maintain and use for free.	<i>Britannica</i> says its goal is to be the best, most thorough source of knowledge available.
How Is it Delivered?	Wikipedia is available online. The online articles can be updated constantly.	<i>Britannica</i> is available online and in print. The company stopped creating its print edition in 2012, but these books will continue to be available in libraries for years. Only the online version can be updated.
How Much Does it Cost?	Wikipedia is free.	In 2012, <i>Britannica</i> online was available for \$69.95 per year. The print version, which is made up of 32 volumes, cost \$1,395.
What Is its Scope?	Since Wikipedia has so many contributors, it has a broader range of articles than <i>Britannica</i> .	<i>Britannica</i> has a large number of articles, but not as many as Wikipedia.