

Present a personality on Wikipedia

e-lang citizen

Teacher sheet

Task

You can propose the following task to your learners.

You are going to contribute to Wikipedia by adding or completing a page on a person from your cultural environment: a celebrity from the world of entertainment, science, sports, etc. In this way, you will contribute to making people from your cultural background known to the readers of the encyclopaedia.

Site

Wikipedia: www.wikipedia.org

The encyclopaedia is based on the collaborative principle of a wiki, i.e. a platform engine that allows several people to edit web pages. Everyone can participate in this project by sharing their knowledge or skills (in formatting, for example). No registration is necessary, but the IP address of the publication (allowing the identification and location of the computer used) is then recorded by the site and appears in the history of the page.

The online encyclopaedia is available in many languages.

Alternative for young children: there is a collaborative encyclopaedia created by children in French: Wikimini, <https://fr.wikimini.org/wiki/Accueil>. For French and other languages, there is also Vikidia: www.vikidia.org/.

CEFR level - For B1 level and above

Objectives

Digital citizenship and literacy

	Dimensions covered by the task	Possible specific objectives
Digital citizenship	Ethical and responsible	Selecting personalities according to thoughtful, responsible and ethical criteria, possibly favouring articles on personalities based on their gender or their membership of visible or invisible minorities.
	Critical	Taking a critical look at Wikipedia, its operation and its reliability.
Meaning-making literacy	Information Literacy	Carrying out documentary research.
Interaction Literacy	Participation Literacy	Contributing to an online collaborative encyclopaedia.

Priority language activities

- Written production: writing articles.
- Written receipt: understanding and evaluating the information found.

Multilingual dimension

If we suggest searching in different languages understood by the learners, this will give the task of cross-linguistic mediation. A similar principle will apply if learners are invited to search for articles about the chosen person on versions of the encyclopaedia in other languages.

Possible steps

- Discover how Wikipedia works. What do they know about how it works? What is a wiki and how does it work? We can explore a page and its different tabs: discussion, history, edit and edit code.
- Discover the social rules of operation of the encyclopaedia. The page "[Rules and recommendations](#)" / "[Policies and guidelines](#)" exists in 102 languages. Learners can make a list of rules to keep in mind.

- List the personalities that the learners would like to present and ask them to justify their choice.
- Classify the proposals according to the field (sport, cinema, song, science, etc.) and other criteria: gender, representatives of visible or invisible minorities, etc. This will make it possible to have a discussion on the representation of genders and minorities in Wikipedia and to decide to promote the creation of pages to highlight those who are less visible. This will also make it possible to reflect on responsible and ethical choice criteria.
- Choose the personalities to present and form small groups for each of them.
- The following steps are done in groups.
 - Search Wikipedia in the target language to see if the personality already has a page.
 - If the personality already has a page (in the target language), check whether the information seems correct and change it if necessary.
 - Check if a page exists in another language(s) that the learners understand and check the information. It may be interesting to try to understand the differences in the information provided in the different versions.
 - List what is missing and what you would like to add. Check the information to be added.
 - If the person does not yet have a page, on the results page there will be an indication that the page does not exist. Click on the name in red to open an empty page.
 - Consult pages of personalities in the same field as the one you want to present and analyse them: what is their structure? What information is given? In what order? Are there any recurring linguistic elements?
 - Create a document with a standard structure (outside Wikipedia so as not to block access if several successive modifications are recorded in a short time).
 - List the information you want to give about the personality. Check and complete this information. Note down good sources to be quoted as references.
 - Write the page. It is important to note that the page does not have to be complete. Wikipedia works in a collaborative mode.
- Self-assess and revise using the list of encyclopaedia rules (see above), then exchange texts between groups and revise according to the feedback.
- Publish and format texts on the encyclopaedia using the visual editor.
- Check, in the following weeks, the modifications that other Wikipedians can make. Records that lack information can be classified as “draft”. A mention can indicate the lack of sources. This may encourage learners to complete them.

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Student sheet

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CEFR level - For B1 level and above

Objectives

Digital citizenship and literacy

While completing this task, you can:

- learn how the Wikipedia encyclopaedia works;
- take a critical look at this encyclopaedia and see how it works;
- make a thoughtful and responsible choice of personalities to present;
- seek and evaluate information;
- learn how to format an article on the Wikipedia wiki.

Multilingual/intercultural dimension

You will be able to compare pages about the same personality in different languages and search for information in resources (online and offline) written in languages you understand.

Hints

Keep in mind who you are addressing

Before you start preparing your article, it would be worthwhile to find out about the social rules of the Wikipedia community. In the different languages, there is a page that specifies these and gives recommendations. Check this page in the target language and/or in other languages you understand.

You can access the page in French "[Règles et recommandations](#)" or in English "[Policies and guidelines](#)" and then choose one of the many languages in which it exists. Listing the rules that you think are essential will give you a grid for evaluating your contribution once you have made it.

When choosing information, also think about what readers would like to find on your page.

Work on the language-related aspects

Consult similar pages in the target language by looking for personalities from the same field as the one you are going to present. You can analyse them to help you build your article: what is the structure of these pages? What information is given? In which order? Is there a particular layout with sidebars? Are there any recurring linguistic elements?

For you to think about

While completing this task, you can reflect on the following:

- What do you think of the way the encyclopaedia works?
- Has this experience changed your view of Wikipedia, especially its reliability? Why or why not? Have you thought about "sourcing" your article? Why do you think this is relevant (or not)? Does this encourage you to check in future whether or not sources are indicated on the articles you consult?
- What guided your choice of 'your' personality? What other criteria could you have used? Have you thought about posting an article about a personality based on their gender, visible or invisible minority status? Why or why not? Why might it be important to feature this kind of personality?