

Video Transcript: Can I use Wikipedia in my research?

In this screencast you will learn about how Wikipedia can be useful in your research.

As a starting point in your research, Wikipedia can be used effectively as a reference resource that can lead you to background information on your topic, useful search terms and phrases for further research, as well as relevant references and external links to related websites.

For instance, in the Wikipedia entry for the October Crisis you can find a number of useful features. You can find additional search terms and phrases that you can use when you further pursue your research in the library catalogue or an article database. You can also find in-text references that will tell you what sources inform the claims and assertions made in the Wikipedia entry. Towards the end of the entry, you will also find a reference list, external links, and further reading suggestions.

One potential problem with a Wikipedia entry is that it may lack *authority*—that is, the information may not be reliable, credible, objective, or trustworthy. More specifically, the information in Wikipedia entries may be compromised by lack of peer-review, bias, and authors that have insufficient credentials.

There are different ways to ensure that the information from Wikipedia you're relying on is authoritative. For instance, you can take advantage of the "View History" tab in Wikipedia, which displays the history of the page's previous revisions in the order that the changes were made, including the date and time of each edit, the username or IP address of the user who made the change, and a summary of the changes. In addition, the "Talk" tab feature in Wikipedia allows editors to comment on improvements needed in any given entry and fosters a culture of discussion about information.

Go to www.lib.unb.ca/research/ for more tips on how to do effective research.