

LESSON PLAN 55 : WAYS TO WORK WITH WIKIPEDIA IN YOUR CLASS

Objective: Use the online encyclopaedia for teaching and learning

Age range: 10-14

WHAT IS WIKIPEDIA?

It's an online, multilingual encyclopaedia that anyone can edit and contribute to. Although the site has its flaws, Wikipedia (en.wikipedia.org) remains a useful source of information. It's one of the most popular websites in the world (9th according to stats sites Alexa) and currently has 3,336,450 articles in the English version alone. Here are a few ways you can use it to good effect in your classroom.



YOU WILL NEED

Browser, Internet access.

DEVELOPING SKILLS

Research, communication, collaboration, general technology use.

METHODS

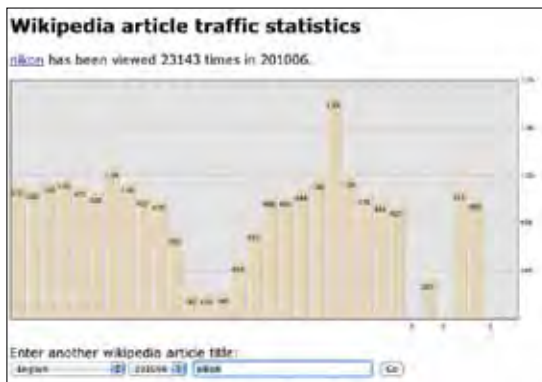
1. Receive Wikipedia's 'Article of the Day' (fizurl.com/2jXxYG) – learn about something new every day by signing up to receive a daily featured article. These are considered to be the best on the site, and reviewed for accuracy, neutrality, completeness, and style.



2. See how things change over time – the site keeps all historical records of edits made to a page. This is a way to track how a topic has been viewed over time, or how a product/service/fashion has developed. On any entry, simply select history, and then choose any point in time.
3. Compare Wikipedia and Google – search these two powerhouses of the Internet at the same time with Googlepedia (fizurl.com/9tEncY). This browser add-on (for Firefox) will display the relevant Wikipedia article along with Google's search results.
4. Try an alternative way to search Wikipedia – Powerset (powerset.com) is a search engine designed to search articles on Wikipedia.



5. Find out the most popular articles – 'Wikipedia article traffic statistics' (stats.grok.se) provides usage stats by subject, so you can see how interested people are in a certain topic on Wikipedia at any given time.



6. Read a simpler version – Originally intended for people whose first language is not English, Simple English Wikipedia (simple.wikipedia.org) is a simpler form of the real thing, and provides more readable version of complex articles.
7. See what happened when – check out these lists to see what events took place in a particular year (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_years), decade (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_decades), or century (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_centuries)
8. Navigate Wikipedia as a mindmap – Wikimindmap (wikimindmap.org) can create a mindmap to help you get an overview of an idea or browse through related articles really quickly.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES

If wikis are your thing, try exploring some of Wikipedia's sister sites:

- **Wiktionary** (en.wiktionary.org) – a multilingual dictionary.
- **Wikibooks** (en.wikibooks.org) – a collection of collaborative textbooks.
- **Wikiquote** (en.wikiquote.org) – a compendium of referenced quotations.
- **Wikispecies** (species.wikimedia.org) – a directory of species.
- **Wikiversity** (en.wikiversity.org) – a collection of learning resources

DID YOU KNOW?

Uncyclopedia (uncyclopedia.wikia.com) is a Wikipedia clone where practically nothing is true.

