

Ecology and Conservation of Tropical Wildlife Group Project Assignment – Fall 2012

Your assignment this semester is to critically review entries related to Tropical Ecology in the online encyclopedia Wikipedia, rewrite them, and upload the revisions. This assignment will be broken up into three smaller pieces:

1) 1st Draft of Group Project: due October 11th and worth 50 points

This draft is the first version of the text you plan on uploading to Wikipedia. Please include citations and any figures or pictures you think would be useful. Each entry should be 1200-1500 words in length. Note that prior to the Draft revision, you should have left these ideas for improving an article on its discussion page to get feedback from the Wikipedia community.

2) 2nd Draft of Group Project: due November 8th and worth 50 points

This is the second draft, with final versions of figures and pictures. You should have incorporated the feedback of other Wikipedia editors and your classmates.

3) Final Submission of Group Project: due November 29th and worth 100 points

This is the deadline for uploading your revision to Wikipedia (i.e., moving from the Sandbox to the Main Space). No need to submit a paper copy of the revisions – we will evaluate the on-line version. If your article is new or was a “stub”, please compose a one sentence hook and nominate it for “Did you Know”.

Some suggestions as you prepare to start on the project:

- 1) **START NOW.** It takes a while to get registered with Wikipedia and become familiar with the editing tools.
- 2) By next week you must:
 - i. Watch the online video “10 years of Wikipedia: an overview” (link available on course webpage).
 - ii. Set up your user account
 1. Follow “create account” link in the top right corner of any Wikipedia page
 2. Read: entry on how/why to do so at
 3. Leave a message on Bruna’s talk page (Embruna). Bruna will then add usernames to the Wikipedia Course page
- 3) Read the entry on the mechanics of editing at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:Editing>

- 4) Read the entry on Writing better articles at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Writing_better_articles
- 5) Remember Wikipedia's Five Pillars:
 - i. Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia
 - ii. Wikipedia has a neutral point of view
 - iii. Wikipedia is free content (do not plagiarize and respect copyright)
 - iv. Wikipedians should interact in a respectful and civil manner (see: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Etiquette>)
 - v. Wikipedia does not have firm rules
- 6) Practice your editing and draft edits in your “sandbox”
 - Make sure you're logged in on Wikipedia.
 - Go to your user page and click "Edit".
 - Write `[[User:<your user name>/Sandbox]]`
(You do not have to call it "sandbox". You will likely have multiple sandboxes for various things you are working on. For example, you could call your new sandbox: User:<your user name>/MySandbox1; User:<your user name>/MySandbox2; or even User:<your user name>/MyPracticeSpace. You decide.)
 - Click on "Save Page".
 - Click on the link you just created.
- 7) Check the Discussion tab of the entries: many of them are part of WikiProject, where there are guidelines and templates that will make your work easier.
- 8) Don't forget that proposed changes should first be presented on the discussion/talk page to receive feedback from other Wikipedia users. Discussion of the changes continues until consensus is reached.
- 9) You may find the following article useful (it's where we got the figure below). It will be available on the course web page: Callis, K. L. et al. 2009. Improving Wikipedia: educational opportunity and professional responsibility. *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*. 24(4): 177-179.
- 10) Use the following flow chart and information to get started.

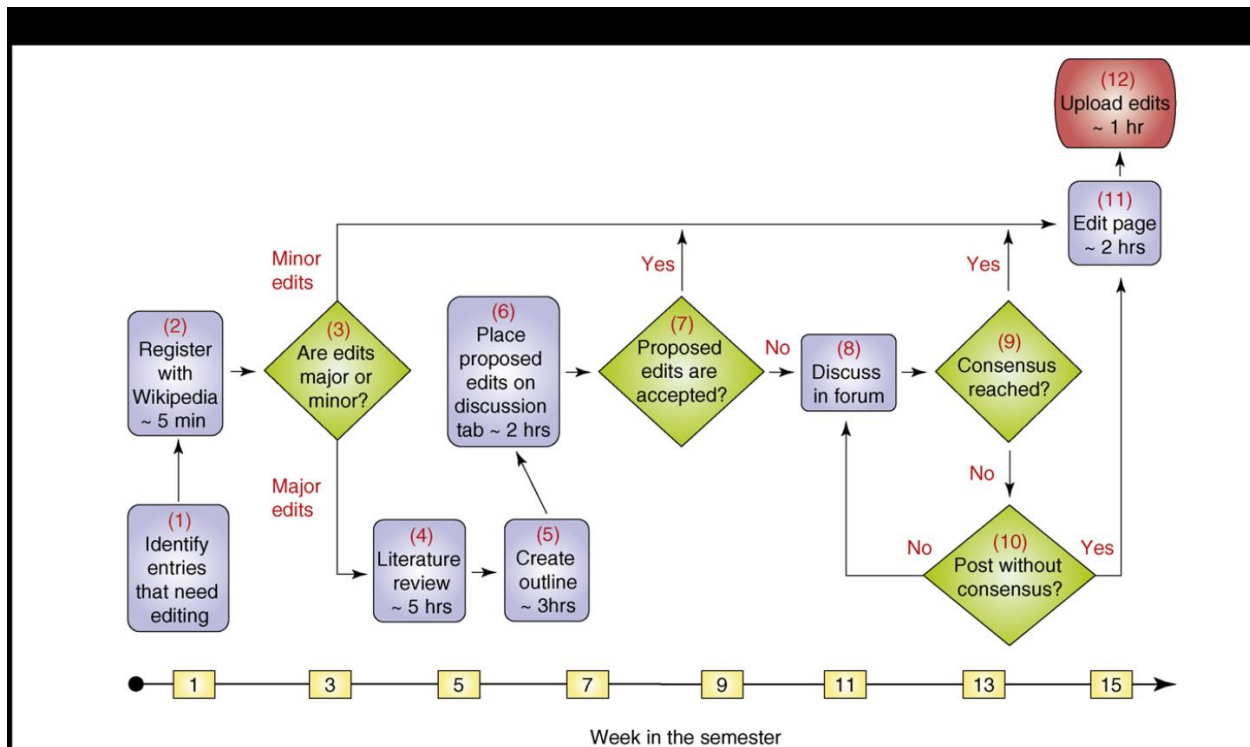


Figure 1. Flow chart illustrating the process of editing Wikipedia with a suggested timeline for a semester-long project. (1) The identification of deficient Wikipedia articles can be done by the instructor or by students.

(2) The first step in editing entries is the creation of a Wikipedia account (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:UserLogin>) and a user page with areas of expertise.

(3) The scope of the revisions depends on the quality of the entry – major edits include restructuring, adding/deleting or editing substantial sections, whereas minor edits include expanding sections, grammatical edits or inserting references. (4) A literature review leads to selection of key references to be cited within the text. Citations can be added from a short-cut key on the editing page.

(5–6) Proposed changes should first be presented on the discussion/talk page (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Talk_page) to receive feedback from other Wikipedia users. (7–9) Discussion of the changes continues until consensus is reached. (10) If consensus cannot be reached, changes can still be posted; however, this might lead to changes being reverted by other users.

(11–12) Wikipedia has helpful tutorials for editing entries (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Tutorial>) as well help pages, such as the sandbox tool (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:About_the_Sandbox), which allows users to work on drafts without modifying the article.