# Wikinews Writing

## A guide by Laura Hale

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# Wikinews Writing

Wikinews is Wikimedia's contributor driven news site. Published articles appear in Google News and can be easily linked on Wikipedia articles. This can draw attention to stories the regular media would not cover.

Anyone can contribute to Wikinews. When contributing, there are a few things to remember:

- Wikinews has two types of articles: Synthesis and original reporting;
- Stories must be verifiable;
- Stories should have pictures;
- Stories must be written in active voice; and
- All articles are reviewed prior to publication.

# Wikinews Writing: Synthesis

One of the two major types of articles found on Wikinews is synthesis reporting, which requires using multiple published news stories to write your own article in your own words.

Consider writing this type of article if you cannot attend a sporting event in person, or reach key people inside sport who have already given statements to the media.

Synthesis articles require at least two sources, and are cited at the bottom of the article in their own section using the following template:

*{{source|url=
|title=
|author=
|pub=
|date=
}}

Before writing a synthesis article, read the sources you will use to make sure you understand what they say, assist you in thinking about how to write your article neutrally, and how to present ideas in the article using your own voice for an international audience. This is important because synthesis articles should not just repeat what the sources say.

# Wikinews Writing: Original Reporting

The most prestigious type of article on Wikinews is original reporting because it allows covering of topics that might not otherwise be covered and can provide unique insights into a news story.

Most, not all, original reporting is planned in advance. Planning to do original reporting needs to start before you sit down to write. Identify the event you will cover or the person you will interview, and organise any special access required by representing yourself as a freelance reporter. Determine how you will take notes during the event or interview, or record the interview or event, and consider if you will take photographs.  Then take the notes and record.

Notes and recording  are important because everything in an article on Wikinews must be verifiable by posting your notes and recordings, or information on where these can be found, on the collaboration page.  If it does not appear in your notes referenced on the collaboration page, the facts cannot appear in the article.

Additional information can be at https://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Wikinews:Original_reporting

# Wikinews Writing: Verifiable

Synthesis and original reporting both require all information be verifiable.  Sourcing helps insure that articles are neutral, and avoids reporting errors.

Because of Wikinews' reviewing process, only freely available sources are allowed for synthesis articles.  Offline sources are not acceptable and sources behind paywalls are not allowed.  Some exceptions are allowed, if the materials are shared via the scoop@wikinewsie.org. This is for confidential sources, sources that cannot be shared on the collaboration page because of copyright issues or embargos.

If you  are using non-English sources, consider providing a translation on the collaboration page to facilitate work being done by the reviewer.

Additional information can be found at https://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Wikinews:Cite_sources

# Wikinews Writing: Pictures

Wikinews stories should have pictures. If you're planning to submit a story, you'll want to think about the picture before writing the story for original reporting and after writing for synthesis.

For original reporting, you may want to select a picture you took and then upload it to Commons under a free to use license, or to Wikinews under a fair use license.

For synthesis reporting, you need to find a relevant image on Commons. If nothing is available, you may want to seek another relevant image on a site like Flickr that has images that may allow license importing to Commons. Otherwise, you may need to select a generic image such as a map, generic sporting equipment or a venue to illustrate an article.

When including an image on Wikinews, the photographer must always be credited. This is done by {{image source|PHOTOGRAPHER}} in the image description. The text on the right renders the properly formatted image on the right.

[[File:Australia National Archery Championship 004.JPG|left|thumb|Ingley at the Championships{{image source|[[User:LauraHale|LauraHale]]}}]]

Ingley at the Championships
Image: LauraHale.

# Wikinews Writing: Style

The following is from an essay on the pillars of Wikinews summarises style guidelines: "The headline tells the most important and unique thing about the focus of the article. Then the lede captures the essence of the article by succinctly answering as many as reasonably possible of the basic questions about the focus. The lede should show the focus is newsworthy. After the lede, later paragraphs expand on the focus using inverted pyramid style. The inverted pyramid arrangement of the later paragraphs, especially, has lots of room for variation."

When writing for Wikinews, this means your article needs to have at least three paragraphs. Use active voice where possible.  Put the most important information at the top of the article, and the least important information at the bottom.  Avoid using metaphors.  Be concise. Avoid jargon if a more commonly used word can be more easily understood by readers. Write times with an international audience in mind by stating at what time events took place.

A copy of the style guide can be found at https://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Wikinews:Style_guide

# Wikinews Writing: Reviewing

Before an article appears on Wikinews' front page, in Google News and can be linked on Wikipedia articles, the article needs to be reviewed. You submit your article for review by clicking on the submit for review button.



Once done, an information box like the one below appears on the article. This new box informs reviewers that the article is ready to be reviewed for publication.



When the reviewer starts their review, they will have an assessment tool like the one below to aid them in determining if the article is ready for publication and assist in providing you, the writer, information on how to improve the article if it is not ready for publication.

# Wikinews Writing: Reviewing

Articles are assessed on five criteria: Copyright, newsworthiness, verifiability, neutrality and style.

- **Copyright**: Does the article have any copyright violations? Do all images have acceptable licenses or fair use tags?  Was any of the text plagiarised to write the article?  Are all quotes properly attributed?

- **Newsworthiness**: Does the article focus on a specific event?  Is the primary purpose of the article to report facts? Has the relevance of the story been explained to a global audience?

- **Verifiability**: Can all the facts in the article be verified by cited sources or original notes found on the collaboration page?

- **NPOV**: Is the article written from a neutral point of view?

- **Style**: Does your article comply with the style guide? Is the article written in a pyramid style? Does the first paragraph explain the most important facts of the article? Does the article use active voice?  Is the article written for an international audience? Does it have a picture with the photographer credited?

If an article meets all these criteria, the reviewer will pass it.  If it does not, the article will contain feedback that explains where the article fails against this criterion.

When submitting an article for review, remember that your relationship with the reviewer is collaborative: you both share the same goal of getting the article published.