**Evaluating Web Information: Exploring Wikipedia**

Go to Wikipedia. Make sure you are in the English version. Follow the instructions below in order to **critically analyze** Wikipedia information.

1. 1. Find the Wikipedia entry for **Wikipedia**. After skimming this article, and from your own experiences, in your opinion what are Wikipedia’s strengths and weaknesses?

Instructor: strengths: will sometimes find more up to date information about a topic, and Wikipedia is an interesting experiment in the uses of social media, etc. However, the people who write the articles may not always be the preeminent experts or scholars on a particular topic).

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1. Find the entry for American Civil War. In partners, search for the authors of this entry. Hint: Look for the **View History** tab: Who is Jim Wae? In the space below, describe the authors.

(Instructor: Jim Wae’s educational background is in Philosophy)

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1. Look at the **References** section at the bottom of the American Civil War entry. What kinds of sources are listed there? How might this information help you write a paper about the Civil War?

(Instructor: The first book listed was published by a University Press, the second entry was written by Bruce Catton—if you Google him, a wiki entry comes up that describes him as a notable historian of the Civil War. We also have several of his books in Mirlyn.)

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1. Justify a situation when it would be **appropriate** to use the information from the American Civil War Wikipedia entry. In what situations would it be **inappropriate** to use this information? Why?

(Instructor: A Wikipedia entry can be a useful to get a basic overview of a topic, but in most cases it’s not suitable to use as a source in a paper, \*unless\* the parameters of the assignment are to use popular or non-scholarly sources. A good Wikipedia entry will also have extensive references at the end of an article—often these are articles published in scholarly journals, or books that are published by reputable scholars.)

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