

Unit 3.5: We are co-authors

Producing a wiki



Software: Google Sites, Popplet

Hardware: Laptop/desktop computers (alternatives: iPads or Chromebooks)

Overview

In this unit, pupils collaborate to create a 'mini **Wikipedia**'. They then go on to add or amend content on the real Wikipedia. In:

- **Session 1** they plan their class **wiki**
- **Session 2** they use Wikipedia to find information
- **Session 3** they create their class wiki
- **Session 4** they edit the class wiki
- **Session 5** they edit Wikipedia
- **Session 6** they review their work.

Alternatives

The school's learning platform may include its own wiki or collaborative content tool to which pupils already have access. Some of the activities here could be accomplished using a single shared document in Google Docs or Microsoft 365. If you have a web server, you can set up and host your own instance of Wikipedia's platform – MediaWiki. There are several hosted wiki platforms available, including Wikidot, PBworks, TiddlyWiki and GitHub.

Knowledge, skills and concepts

In this unit, pupils will learn to:

- understand the conventions for collaborative online work, particularly in **wikis**
- be aware of their responsibilities when editing other people's work
- become familiar with **Wikipedia**, including potential problems associated with its use
- practise their research skills
- write for a target audience using a wiki tool
- develop collaboration skills
- develop proofreading skills.

Progression

In Key Stage 1:

- Pupils researched topics online in **Unit 2.4: We are safe researchers**, and likely encountered Wikipedia content.

In Key Stage 2:

- Pupils created digital content that could go online in **Unit 3.4: We are who we are**.
- Pupils will further develop their skills in working collaboratively to produce written content in **Unit 4.4: We are bloggers**, **Unit 5.4: We are web developers**, **Unit 6.3: We are publishers** and **Unit 6.4: We are connected**.

Assessment – by the end of the unit:

All pupils can:

- work with others to plan a project
- find and read an article on **Wikipedia**
- create content for a **wiki**
- edit their own content.

Most pupils can:

- identify the sources used in their research
- evaluate an article for trustworthiness
- edit other people's content
- edit content on Wikipedia.

Some pupils can:

- organise a research project by breaking it into manageable parts
- appreciate the importance of a neutral point of view
- appreciate the pillars underpinning the Wikipedia project.

Background information

- Tim Berners-Lee's original vision for the web was to have lots of pages of information, contributed to by anyone with access, and connected via **hyperlinks**. Over time, much of the web's content became more tightly controlled, with large organisations providing content for others to consume, alongside multiple platforms on which users might share their own content.
- Jimmy Wales' **Wikipedia** website provided one way of returning at least part of the web to something closer to Berners-Lee's vision. Wikipedia aspires to be an authoritative encyclopaedia developed by the community of its users. Anybody with access to Wikipedia can edit its content. The changes made are policed by other users – Wikipedia pages have detailed change histories and users can easily revert changes that do not improve the contents of the encyclopaedia.

Key vocabulary

Algorithm: a sequence of precise instructions or steps (sometimes a set of rules) to achieve an objective

Creative Commons: copyright licensing scheme in which content can be re-used without additional permission, subject to certain specified conditions

Debug: correct mistakes in a computer program or algorithm

Five pillars: governing principles of Wikipedia: it is an encyclopaedia, it has a neutral point of view, it is free, it has a code of conduct and it has rules that continue to evolve

Hyperlinks: text or images that, when clicked, open another page or move to another part of the document

Hypertext mark-up language (HTML): predominant language for web pages

Wiki: website that allows the creation and editing of any number of interlinked web pages via a web browser; often used to create collaborative works

Wikipedia: online encyclopaedia edited by its users

Differentiation

See each session (pages 53–58) for ways to increase support and add challenge to this unit.

Some pupils may need additional support in accessing the significant text elements of this unit – screen readers, font/display adjustments, voice recognition and other assistive technology may be of benefit (see www.abilitynet.org.uk).

You might consider using Google Translate to support pupils whose first language is not English.

Wikipedia is available in a range of languages. The Simple English version of Wikipedia uses more accessible vocabulary and simpler grammar than the original version; articles on this version are also generally much shorter.

More confident pupils might like to explore the history, talk and source tabs on Wikipedia, investigating how pages have changed over time, and the continuing debates around page contents. Some pupils might take a lead in planning the class's **wiki** project.

Cross-curricular opportunities

This unit works best when linked explicitly with a topic being studied in another subject area.

English: Pupils can write for audience and purpose. The proofreading and copyediting skills used will reinforce spelling and grammar work.

Maths: Pupils could work together to create a mathematical vocabulary **wiki**.

History: Pupils could create fact files about historical figures, such as Boudica or Alfred the Great.

Geography: Pupils could use a wiki to document their understanding of climate zones.

Science: Pupils could create a wiki to explore the differences between animal groups or species.

Preparation for teaching the unit



Things to do

- Make sure pupils have access to Google Sites from their devices (see *Useful links*), and spend some time familiarising yourself with these.
- Use Google Sites to set up a simple, empty collaborative website, giving all pupils editing privileges (see CPD video).
- If you wish to allow home access to Google Sites, check this complies with your school's acceptable use policy and ensure that parents and carers are fully informed.
- Read pages 50–51 to get an overview of the unit.
- Choose a topic to research and create links to a few relevant websites on a page on the shared site.
- Ensure needed devices are booked in advance.
- Work through the unit yourself so that you know what is expected of pupils.
- You could explore possibilities for working collaboratively with another school or class.
- Watch the CPD videos on 'Learning about wikis' and 'Tips for collaborative writing'.
- Think about some of the *Challenge* or *Support* suggestions on pages 53–58 to extend your higher-attaining pupils or support lower attainers.



Resources needed

- **Software:** Google Sites, Popplet
- **Hardware:** Laptop/desktop computers (alternatives: iPads or Chromebooks)



Online resources provided

Session resources

- Worksheet 3.5a: End-of-unit quiz
- Worksheet 3.5b: Pupil self-assessment
- Teaching slides 3.5a–3.5f
- Walkthrough videos 3.5a–3.5c
- Interactive end-of-unit quiz 3.5

Additional resources

- CPD video: Learning about wikis
- CPD video: Tips for collaborative writing
- CPD video: Creating a class wiki using Google Sites



Collaboration

This unit is centred on collaboration, with pupils working together to create, edit and link pages about an agreed topic. Pupils also learn about collaboration at a much larger scale through reading and subsequently editing Wikipedia content.



Online safety

- The usual precautions need to be taken with web access, ensuring that access to inappropriate material is blocked by filters. Be aware that while the language of Simple English Wikipedia should be accessible to primary-aged pupils, it has not been written with children in mind and therefore some content might be considered inappropriate. Page-based or content-level filtering is recommended.
- It is best to create wikis using a secure platform such as Google Sites or the school's own learning platform. If you use an external service, you will need to create accounts and limit how much personal data is provided. Check your school's policy.
- Pupils may disagree over details of their page content, or use the shared workspace to add material not related to the subject of the wiki. Keep an eye on activity logs and intervene when appropriate, to help pupils work through problems.



Useful links

Software and tools

- Google Sites: www.sites.google.com
- Simple Wikipedia: simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page
- Wikipedia's five pillars: simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Five_pillars
- Popplet: www.popplet.com

Online tutorials

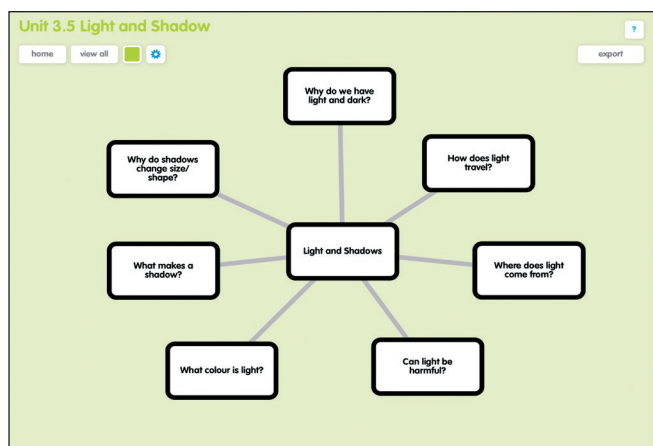
- Simple Wikipedia: simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:Contents
- Wikipedia style guide: simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Manual_of_Style
- Wikipedia syntax: mediawiki.org/wiki/Help:Formatting
- Editing Wikipedia: simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Student_tutorial
- Google Sites: www.support.google.com/sites
- Popplet: www.popplet.com/blog/tutorial-getting-started-all-about-popples/

Information and ideas

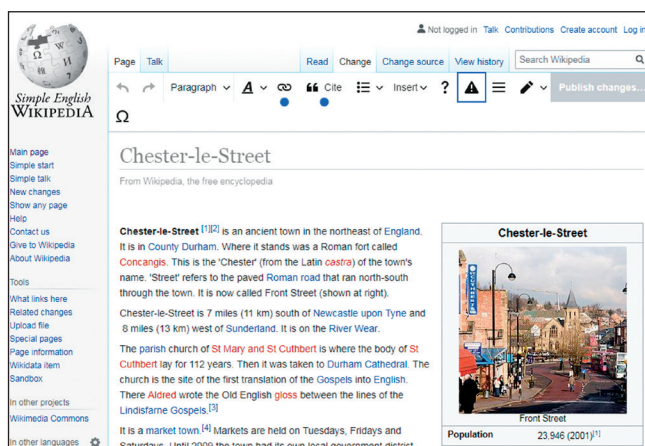
- Wiki in Plain English: www.youtube.com/watch?v=-dnL00TdmLY
- Jimmy Wales: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b016kgfd
- Developing wikis: www.open.edu/openlearnworks/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=643%3f

Unit outcomes

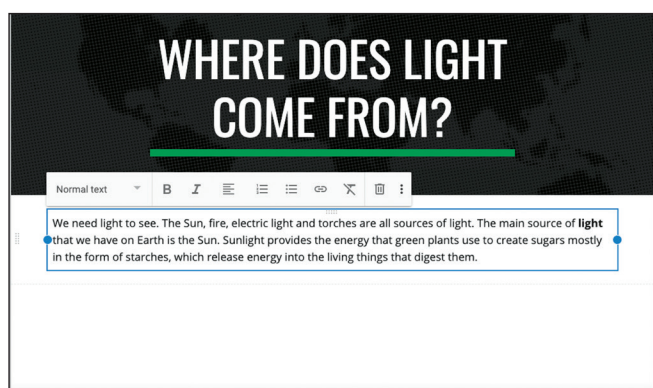
Below are some examples of the outcomes you could expect from this unit.



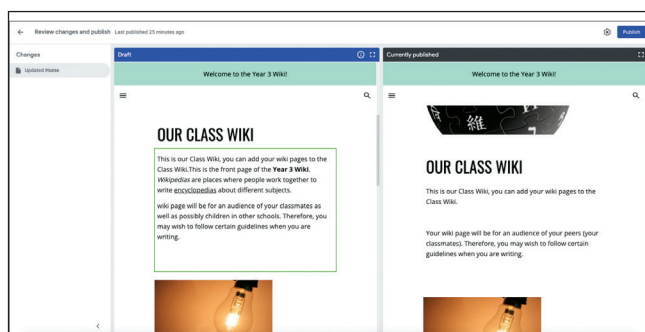
Session 1: Creating research questions in a popplet



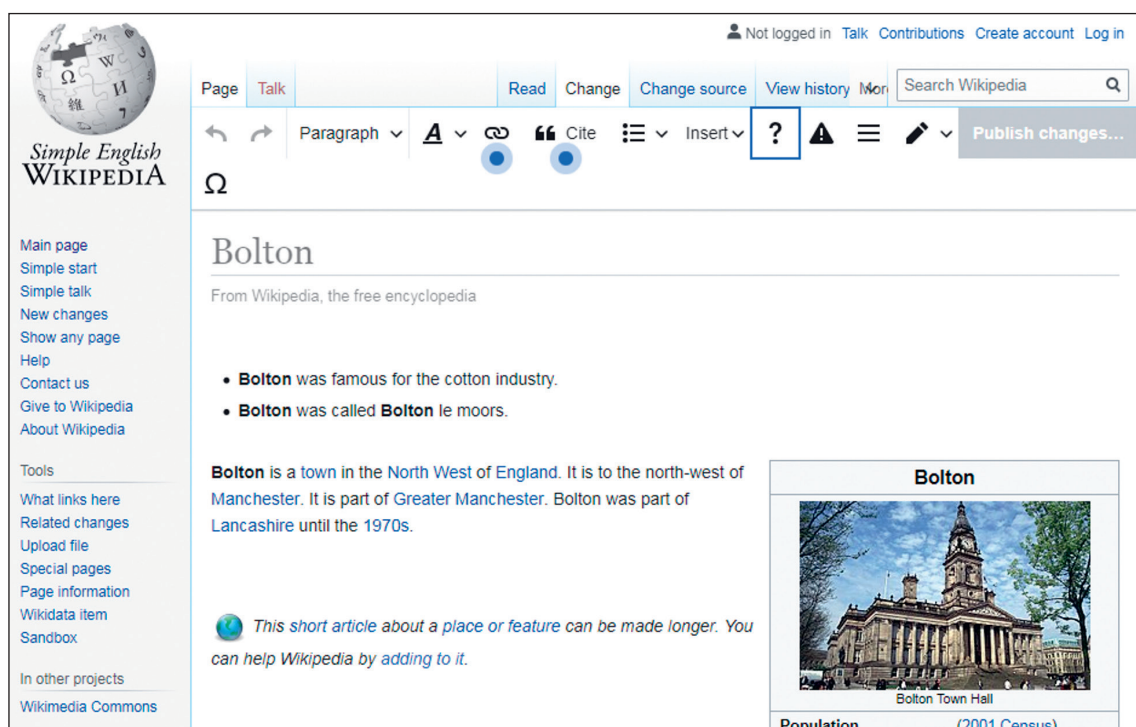
Session 2: Searching and editing Simple English Wikipedia



Session 3: Creating a class wiki



Session 4: Editing the wiki and recording reasons for the changes made



Session 5: Editing a Wikipedia page