

GoogleLitTrip User's Guide

A Word About Wikipedia Resources Used in the *The Kite Runner* Lit Trip

Several of the images and internet resource links used in the *The Kite Runner* Lit Trip are based in the Wikipedia site. Most educators are quite aware of the controversy regarding reliability of Wikipedia for scholarly research. Many educators may even have forbidden their students from using Wikipedia without secondary sources verifying any information from Wikipedia. Some may even have forbidden any students from using Wikipedia under any circumstances whatsoever.

Though Wikipedia makes no claims to be free of the kinds of uninformed information that scholars, professors, and teachers fear, the editors of Wikipedia, being aware of such academic skepticism, are taking very aggressive steps in an attempt to preserve the "open" editing model of wikis while at the same time developing a wide range of processes by which they are dramatically reducing the potential for uninformed and/or malicious entries.

Educators must recognize in attempting to remain current in today's world of rapid information growth, they themselves may fall victim to believing information that was "less true" yesterday than it is today. What was "true" about Wikipedia's reliability "yesterday" is old and probably outdated today. It would be helpful for educators to read Wikipedia's current position on its reliability at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reliability_of_Wikipedia.



An example of one of Wikipedia's newer features is evident in this graphic taken on March 24, 2008 from the page on Al Qaeda.

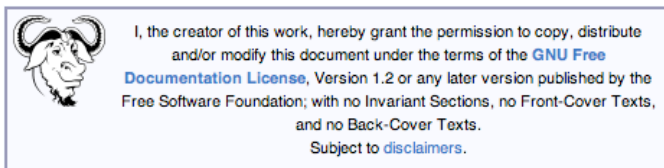
Similar messages indicate when articles have little or no reference citations.

Though I personally still am cautious about using Wikipedia, I have come to realize that for some research, it is an excellent starting point for finding information that is more current and accessible than more traditional scholarly resources. Wikipedia also has entries on subject matters that more traditional encyclopedias do not deem sufficiently important to include. An example of this is the information regarding the various high schools in Fremont, California where Amir's graduation ceremony might have taken place.



I've also discovered that Wikipedia is an excellent resource for finding exact locations of hard to find places when creating a Lit Trip since most entries about locations, such as the entry for Ghazi Stadium, include the geographical coordinates in the upper right hand corner. These coordinates can be copied and pasted directly into Google

Earth's Search box to quickly fly directly to the exact location. Additionally, most Wikipedia pages about locations have a list of links near the bottom of the page where Google Earth (and other mapping) place markers can be downloaded.



And, finally, I began using Wikipedia as my first line of research when seeking images that are free of copyright restrictions. Every image in Wikipedia has information on its copyright standing. The vast majority of the images are available under copyright free resources such as Creative Commons copyright rules or the GNU free documentation

license which make them legally available without copyright restrictions. For an example, see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Kabul_Football.jpg (scroll to the bottom of the page to read the exact terms under which the image is available)