A beginner’s guide to editing Wikipedia

A Wikimedia UK training module

https://wikimedia.org.uk/wiki/Universities/University_of_Sheffield
Your trainers for today

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Introductions

• Please introduce yourself in 10 seconds
Housekeeping

- Practical details about this training session
  - Where to plug in chargers
  - Logging on to Wifi
  - Location of toilet facilities
  - Where to find refreshments
  - Planned fire alarms?
  - What to do in an emergency
Times for today’s session

• 14:30 Start, introductions
  – Introduction to Wikimedia and Wikipedia
  – Setting up your account
  – How to edit Wikipedia
  – What makes a good article?
  – Getting started as an editor
  – How to get help when needed

• 16:00 Close
What is Wikimedia?

Imagine a world in which every single human being can freely share in the sum of all knowledge. That’s our commitment.
What is Wikipedia?

• Wikipedia is a very exciting project run by a diverse community of editors
• It is a free encyclopaedia that anyone can edit and contribute to
• It has 15 to 18 billion views per month
• There are 42 million Wikipedia articles in 295 languages
  – It is one of the largest collaborative projects in history; 70,000 people work on it every month
  – They are all volunteers
  – It relies on the contribution of people just like you
• Wikimedia helps to support the editing community
Charles the Bald

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Not to be confused with Charles the Bold.

Charles the Bald (13 June 823 – 6 October 877) was the King of West Francia (843–77), King of Italy (876–77) and Holy Roman Emperor (875–77, as Charles II). After a series of civil wars during the reign of his father, Louis the Pious, Charles succeeded by the Treaty of Verdun (843) in acquiring the western third of the Carolingian Empire. He was a grandson of Charlemagne and the youngest son of Louis the Pious by his second wife, Judith.

Contents
1 Struggle against his brothers
2 Reign in the West
3 Reign as emperor
4 Baldness
5 Marriages and children
6 Ancestry
7 See also
8 Notes
9 References
10 External links

Struggle against his brothers

He was born on 13 June 823 in Frankfurt,[1] when his elder brothers were already adults and had been assigned their own regna, or subkingdoms, by their father. The attempts made by Louis the Pious to assign Charles a subkingdom, first Alemannia and then the county between the Meuse and the Pyrenees (in 832, after the rising of Pepin I of Aquitaine) were unsuccessful. The numerous reconciliations with the rebellious Lothair and Pepin, as well as their brother Louis the German, King of Bavaria, made Charles’s share in Aquitaine and Italy only temporary, but his father did not give up and made Charles the heir of the entire land which was once Gaul. At a diet in Aachen in 837, Louis the Pious bade the nobles do homage to Charles as his heir.[2] Pepin of Aquitaine died in 838, whereupon Charles at last received that kingdom.[2] which angered Pepin’s heirs and the Aquitanian nobles.[3]

The death of the emperor in 840 led to the outbreak of war between his sons. Charles allied himself with his brother Louis the German to resist the pretensions of the new emperor Lothair I, and the two allies defeated Lothair at the Battle of Fontenoy-en-Puisaye on 25 June 841.[6] In the following year, the two brothers confirmed their alliance by the celebrated Oaths of Strasbourg. The war was brought to an end by the Treaty of Verdun in August 843. The settlement gave Charles the Bald the kingdom of the West Franks, which he had been up until then governing and which practically corresponded with what is now France, as far as the Meuse, the Saône, and the Rhône, with the addition of the Spanish March as far as the Ebro. Louis received the eastern part of the Carolingian Empire, known then as East Francia and later as Germany. Lothair retained the imperial title and the Kingdom of Italy. He also received the central regions from Flanders through the Rhineland and Burgundy as king of Middle Francia.
Setting up a Wikipedia account
Creating a new User Account

- Click on the ‘Create account’ link at the top right of a Wikipedia page
- Fill in the form as required
- Once your account is up and running you are logged in
- You can access your User Page at any time by clicking on your user name in the top right of the page
- You can toggle between your User Page and Talk Page using the links at the top left of the page
Logging in

• If you have an account already, log in by clicking on the link at the top right of the Wikipedia page
• You can still edit without being logged in
• Some features require a log in
Creating your User page

• A User Page gives basic information about you
• Having a User Page helps show you are a serious editor
• It should include:
  – Basic information about yourself and particularly interests or areas of expertise that you are happy to share
  – Don’t overshare!
Save, Preview and Show changes

- These 3 buttons will be on any page you edit – including your own
- They allow you to:
  - Save your changes
  - Preview what your changes will look like
  - See what changes you have made

• To go back without saving your changes, just press cancel
As a new user you can get lots of tips and useful links

• Type `{{New user bar}}` at the beginning of your user page to get set up quickly
Editing Wikipedia articles

To practice after this workshop you can go to:

Relax!

- You won’t break anything
- Wikipedia is very robust
  - Changes can be (and often are) reverted to the previous version
  - There are automated programs called bots which continually scan Wikipedia for certain changes and will revert them
What is an edit?

• A positive contribution to Wikimedia which could take the form of:
  – Correcting punctuation
  – Correcting typos on a page
  – Changing the style and tone
  – Removing biased content
  – Adding citations and references
  – Writing a new article
Editing a Wikipedia page

• There are two ways of editing
  – Using Wiki Markup – a coding approach
  – Using Visual Editor which is like editing Word

• Visual Editor can be used for most straightforward editing tasks

• There are some complex editing tasks which need the coding approach
  – e.g. adding information about an animal’s species
The Edit Cycle

1. Save
2. Edit
3. Preview and write edit summary
4. Identify the edit

WikiMedia UK
The Edit Cycle

• Read the page and look for possible problems or improvements
• Identify an edit you want to make
  – Is it an appropriate edit?
  – Is it needed?
  – Check the article’s Talk Page (we will discuss this in more detail later)
• Make the edit
  – Be bold!
• Preview the edit
  – Write an edit summary
• Save the edit
The edit summary

- Always write an edit summary
- A summary should detail the kind of edit you have made
- Give the reason why you have made an edit
- This helps other editors to understand your motivation
  - This helps demonstrate you are a serious editor
Editing is the easy bit!

• The mechanics of making changes and editing a Wikipedia page are relatively simple
• The more complicated issues are about making sure your edits are appropriate
• That is what we will cover next
What makes a good Wikipedia article?
Key points about edits

• **No original research**
  – Articles should summarise what others have published
  – They should not be drawing any new conclusions
  – They should be referenced

• **Neutral point of view**
  – Articles should be accurate and without bias
  – All significant viewpoints should be considered and included
Key points about edits

• Wikipedia articles should be written in an encyclopedic style with a formal tone to the language
The Do’s of the Encyclopedic style

Try to stick to all of these

✓ Use plain language
✓ Be brief
✓ Cite sources to back up factual claims
✓ Attribute viewpoints to the people who hold them
✓ Avoid stating conclusions
  ✓ Unless attributable to specific sources
The Don’ts of Encyclopedic style

Things to avoid...

- Create new essay-like articles or sections
- Structure your writing like an argument
- Use “weasel words”
  - Examples include “most experts agree” or “some people say”
- Use colloquial language or slang
- Use emotive terms
  - Such as “great”, “extraordinary” or “incredible”
- Include personal opinion
- Use very complex language and sentence structure
Exercise – The “Good” Article?

• In groups, look at the handout
• Identify areas which you think need attention
• Use three different highlighters to tag
  – Grammatical errors in one colour
  – Errors or problems in the text in a second colour
  – Missing references in a third colour
The Constitutions of Clarendon were a set of legislative procedures passed by Henry II of England in 1164. The Constitutions were composed of 16 articles and represent an attempt to restrict ecclesiastical privileges and curb the power of the Church courts and the extent of Papal authority in England. In the anarchic conditions of Henry II’s predecessor, Stephen (reigned 1135–54), the church had extended its jurisdiction by taking advantage of the weakness of royal authority. The Constitutions were claimed to restore the judicial customs observed during the reign of Henry I (1100–35), while in fact they were a part of Henry II’s larger expansion of royal jurisdiction into the Church and civil law, which was a defining aspect of his reign.

The Constitutions take their name from Clarendon Palace, Wiltshire, the royal hunting lodge at which they were promulgated.

**Contents**

1. Purposes
2. Effect
3. References
4. External links

### Purposes

The Constitutions' primary goal was to deal with the controversial issue of "criminous clerks", or clergy who had been accused of committing a serious secular crime but were tried in ecclesiastical courts by 'benefit of Clergy'. Unlike royal courts, these ecclesiastical courts were strictly limited in the punishments to which a convicted felon could be subjected; in particular the spilling of blood was prohibited. An ecclesiastical case of murder often ended with the defendant being defrocked (dismissed from the priesthood). In a royal court, murder was often punished with mutilation or death.

The Constitutions of Clarendon were Henry II’s attempts to deal with these problems (and conveniently increase his own power at the same time) by claiming that once the ecclesiastical courts had tried and defrocked clergy, the Church could no longer protect the individual, and convicted former clergy could be further punished under the jurisdiction of secular courts.

It was formerly supposed that Henry wanted all clerks accused of crimes to be tried in the King’s Courts. But this impression, as F. W. Maitland showed, is certainly wrong. A rather complicated arrangement was proposed by which cognizance of the case was first to be taken in the King’s Court.

If the culprit proved to be a clerk, the case was to be tried in the ecclesiastical court, but an officer of the King’s Court was to be present. The officer, if the accused was found guilty, was to conduct him back to the King’s Court after degradation, where he would be dealt with as an ordinary criminal and adequately punished.

The king’s contention was that flogging, fines, degradation, and excommunication, beyond which the spiritual courts could not go, were insufficient as punishment. The archbishop urged that, apart from the principle of clerical privilege, to degrade a man first and to hang him afterwards was to punish him twice for the same offence. Once degraded, he lost all his rights, and if he committed another crime, he might then be punished with death like any other felon.

### Effect

Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury (1162–1170), resisted the Constitutions, especially the clause concerning "criminous clerics". As a result, Henry put Becket up for trial at Northampton. Becket fled into exile with his family. Bishops were in agreement over the articles until the Pope disapproved and then Becket repudiated his arguments. The controversy resulted, becoming so bitter that Becket was murdered on 29 December 1170. After this Henry felt compelled to revoke the two controversial clauses, which went against canon law. However, the rest stayed in effect as law of the land.

The force at the back of St. Thomas represented not only the respect which men feel for a bold fight for principle, but also that blind struggle against the hideous punishments of the age, of which the assertion of ecclesiastical privilege, covering widows and orphans as well as clerks and those that injured them, was a natural expression.
Is our page perfect now?

• Experience tells us:
  – Different people will notice different errors on a page, at different times
    • This is why we need lots of editors
  – An article may need lots of edits to get it completely right

• Collectively, we can make something better than we could individually do on our own – that is why Wikimedia works so well
Your sandbox

• Sandbox pages provide space to experiment with the process of editing Wikipedia pages
• When you are logged in to your User Account you access your sandbox by clicking on the link at the top right of your screen
• The first time you open your sandbox, Wikipedia will automatically create it at the same time
• The next time you will need to click the edit button to change the contents of your sandbox
Exercise
Creating your sandbox

• Open your sandbox
• Look at the paper handout about Manuscript Libraries of English Cathedrals
• Write a short paragraph of text about Cathedral Libraries in your sandbox, using your own words
• Now refer to the Wiki markup cheatsheet
  – Make some text bold
  – Make some text italic
  – Use the codes on the cheat sheet to create the different font effects
• Reference the text using the information on Part 3 of the Manuscript Libraries of English Cathedrals Handout
  – Check the cheat sheet for the code on how to insert references
NB. Paper copy of handout will be provided.
NB. Paper copy of handout will be provided.
NB. Paper copy of handout will be provided.
Reliable sources

• Information should be verifiable
  – Sources should be published

• Reliable sources
  – Third party sources with a reputation for fact checking
  – Books published by academic presses
  – Peer-reviewed academic journals
  – International newspapers

• Sources should represent significant viewpoints
  – Not one-off studies or fringe work

• Try to find the best and most reliable sources available
Referencing your article

Source

Web page

Do you have the full URL?

Yes

Enter the information with appropriate coding

No

Printed Publication

Do you have the ISBN?

Yes

Enter the information with appropriate coding

No

Do you have the publisher’s details?

Yes

Enter the information with appropriate coding

No

STOP

Go back

Go back
• All material on Wikimedia is freely licensed
• This means:
  – People are free to share, copy or redistribute material
  – They can also adapt, remix, transform or build on the material
• However attribution MUST be clearly shown
  – This means giving appropriate credit to the person who created the original material, no matter how much it has been changed
© Copyright continued

- Except for brief attributed quotes, copying content from other copyrighted sources is not allowed on Wikipedia
- All content should be written in your own words
- Public domain and freely licensed content may be added as long as it is properly attributed
Illustrating Wikipedia 1: VisualEditor

‘Edit’ tab

‘Insert’

‘Media’

Animated gif version:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Adding_an_image_using_the_visual_editor_(gif).gif
**Basic code:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>two opening square brackets</th>
<th>pipes: each option (called a parameter) is separated by one of these</th>
<th>by default, photos are aligned right; left and center are the alternatives</th>
<th>two closing square brackets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[[File:John Naka’s Goshin, October 10, 2008.jpg</td>
<td>thumb</td>
<td>260px</td>
<td>right</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- the file name: from Commons begins with "File:" and ends with the file extension (such as “.jpg”)
- thumb: adding this word means to use the standard thumbnail format
- size: to make the picture a specific pixel width, you can add that here, or leave it out for the standard size
- a caption: the text after the last pipe is the caption
Conflict of interest

• It’s best to avoid editing articles about
  – Yourself
  – Your employer
  – Organisations you belong to

• Editors with conflict of interest are likely to have their edits reverted
What to do to avoid conflict of interest issues

• Use the Talk Page to alert senior editors if you spot problems on a page where you might be seen as having a conflict of interest

• These are the types of problems you may want updated or changed
  – Factual inaccuracies
  – Out of date information
  – Outdated photos
Reversion

• Changes a Wikipedia article back to a previous version
  – This is done by more experienced editors
  – Any changes made to the article will be removed

• Used to remove incorrect or inappropriate edits

• Edits which do not follow the standard format will probably be reverted
Reversion is not personal

- If you are unsure why your edits have been reverted, you can ask on the article’s Talk Page
- You can always politely ask an editor why they have made the reversion
- Most reversions are made by automatic bots
  - The aim is to protect Wikipedia against unexpected edits which might be vandalism
Avoiding reversion

• Create a proper User Page
  – This shows you are a serious editor, not someone messing around
• Reference and cite your sources properly
• Check the article’s Talk Page
  – Post on the Talk Page to send other editors to your sandbox to see your draft article before publishing
• Use the Cheat Sheet to guide you
• Look at the next handout to see the time and speed of automatic reversions by Wikimedia bots
  – They revert edits within seconds to protect Wikipedia against vandalism
Revision history of the Becket controversy article
Structured, linked data

Thomas Becket (Q192236)


Other properties

place of burial: Canterbury Cathedral, cathedral in Canterbury, Kent founded in 597
manner of death: homicide, killing of a human being by another human being. Use as value for "manner of death" (P1196)
described by source:
- Thomas a Becket (DNB00)
- Small Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary
- Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary
- Dictionary of National Biography (1885-1900)
- Encyclopædia Britannica (1911)

religion: Christianity, monotheistic religion founded in the 1st century
languages spoken, written or signed: Anglo-Norman, Latin
place of birth: Canterbury, in the City of London

External sources:
- BAV: ADV10230905
- BAV: ADV126260770
- BAV: ADV12820771
- BAV: ADV12940040
- BIBSYS: 90783679
- BNE: XX1137751
- BnF: 126158316
- British Museum: person-institution: 79813
- BVMC: person: 65893
- CANTIC-ID: a10325232
- Catholic Hierarchy: becket
- CERL: crn00945351
- Encyclopædia Universalis: thomas-becket-beckett
- FAST: 52326
- Freebase: /m/0958lc
- GND: 118522102
- Gran Enciclopédia: 0008584
How to ask for help

• Use the Talk Page behind every Wikipedia page
  – For lots more information about how to get the best out of Talk Pages go to:
    • Wikipedia:Talk page guidelines

• Use the Teahouse
  – You can post questions and get a quick reply from a passing editor

• Enter the following into your Wikipedia search box to take you to the Teahouse
  – Wikipedia:Teahouse
Visit your trainer's Talk Page

• You will be given a sheet of paper with the link to your trainer’s Talk Page written on it
• Please go the Talk Page and leave a message and sign it
• Once you have done this, pass the paper on to the next participant who will do the same
• You will then receive a message back from one of the trainers
• Go to your trainer’s Talk Page

NOW!
Putting it into practice!

• Go and look at articles on Wikipedia which you might want to edit
• See if you can spot any potential problems
• Remember the Wikimedia slogan...

Be bold!
What is the most important thing you learned today?

- Discuss in pairs
- Identify one point each
- The trainer will write these topics/thoughts on flip chart
Evaluation

• Please fill in our evaluation form
• It helps us to improve our training

Thanks for attending our training today!
3 – Prague - Astronomical Clock Detail. By 3Felix (Own work). CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AEsculturas._Relog_astron%C3%B3mico._Pra ga.jpg
4 – A monk-cellarer tasting wine from a barrel whilst filling a jug. From Li Livres dou Sainte (BL Sloane 2435, f.44v), by Aldobrandino of Siena - France, late 13th century. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Monk_tasting_wine_from_a_barrel.jpg
12 – Coat of arms for WikiProject Heraldry. By Perhelion. CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:WikiProjekt_Wappen.svg
22 – Libra. Public domain via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Libra2.jpg
24 – A monk working in a scriptorium. Public domain via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Scriptorium.jpg
25 – Archives départementales de l'Oise Cartulaire de l'abbaye d'Ourscamp. By Chatsam (Own work). CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Archives_d%C3%A9partementales_de_l%20Cartulaire_de_l%20abbaye_d%20Ourscamp_0.jpg
30 – Coronation of Fulk of Jerusalem. Roman de Godefroy de Bouillon (BNF Fr22495). Public domain via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fulk.jpg
33 – Part of a single bookcase in the library, Cesena. Public domain via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Libraries_in_the_Medieval_and_Renaissance_Periods_Figure_7.jpg
34 – Bookcases in the library of the University of Leiden. Engraving by Willem Swanenburg; drawing by Johannes Woudanus. Public domain via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Libraries_in_the_Medieval_and_Renaissance_Periods_Figure_5.jpg
35 – Library Upper Hall. By York Minster. CC BY-SA 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:LIBRARY_UPPER_HALL_(4302901143).jpg
40 – “Adding an image using the visual editor (gif)” - screencast by Neil P. Quinn. CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Adding_an_image_using_the_visual_editor_(gif).gif
42 – National Library of Austria, Codex 3069, Fol. 11r. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3A%20CodexMX3069_1.png
43 – Medieval Spear Infantry Icon. By Litiey, vector version by Fulvio314 (File:Medieval Infantry.png). CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Medieval_Infantry_svg
44 – A black sun with a face descends behind the horizon of a marshy landscape; representing the state of putrefaction in alchemy. From Wellcome Images. CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:A_black_sun_with_a_face_descends_behind_the_horizon_of_a_mar Wellcome_V0025641.jpg
46 – A red-faced sun rises above a city; stunted trees stand in the foreground; representing either the culmination of the alchemical work or the star of hope that inspires the alchemist through his tribulations. From Wellcome Images. CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:A_red-faced_sun_rises_above_a_city;_stunted_trees_stand_in_t_Wellcome_V0025642.jpg
49 – Les Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry juillet. Public domain via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Les_Tr%C3%A8s_Riches_Heures_du_duc_de_Berry_juil t.jpg
53 – Woman teaching geometry. BL Burney 275, f. 293 r. Attributed to Meliacin Master. Public domain via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Woman_teaching_geometry.jpg