

## **Wikipedia: Your Research Launchpad**

Yes, you read that right—Wikipedia can be one of the best starting points for your research. It's okay to use Wikipedia! Let's explore how to use it effectively.

First, Wikipedia is an excellent way to quickly get familiar with a topic you may not know much about. But remember, just like any other source, it shouldn't be your only stop. It's important to consult a variety of sources when conducting research. The good news? Wikipedia often provides lots of **hyperlinked text** (blue text) to help you dive deeper into concepts as you read.

### **Subtopics**

One of the biggest perks of using Wikipedia is its ability to inspire subtopics. Let's say you're curious about cryptocurrency but don't know which aspects to explore. A quick glance at the Wikipedia page might help narrow your focus. Some examples of subtopics listed under cryptocurrency are **altcoins**, **blockchain**, and **nodes**.

Finally, Wikipedia is a goldmine for further resources. Think of it like a treasure map that points you to other valuable information.

### **Opposing Viewpoints Database**

The opposing viewpoints database by Gale might be one of the most helpful resources for you as you research. Watch the video in the tab to learn more. The opposing viewpoints database can help you understand many of the perspectives on current issues being discussed by people today.

## **Pew Research Center**

Pew Research Center is a great non-partisan resource for finding data on public opinion and demographic trends. Its findings are available free to the public. Like many of the other databases, Pew Research has filters that allow you to narrow your search results. You can narrow it by date, type of source, region, and more.

## **Google**

Google can be a great resource when conducting background research about a topic.

### ***Evaluate sources***

Not all information that you find on Google will be true. Make sure to focus on the most reliable sources. Some of the best sources may be found on the first page of search results, but don't forget that there are often other great results past the first page.

### ***Use Relevant Keywords***

Don't ask Google questions. Instead, focus on using keywords that reflect the aspects of the topic you want to learn more about. Doing this will help you find more helpful sources.

### ***Avoid Bias***

Make sure to avoid using keyphrases that are biased. For example, if you type “minimum wage problems,” Google tries to give you sources that say minimum wage is a problem. A strong bias is likely already built into the sources you see. Similarly, even though the terms “illegal aliens” and “immigrants” are getting at a similar concept, search one term over the other will lead you to very different results.

***So when using Google:***

1. Be mindful of the keywords you use to search
2. Be critical of the sources Google provides you with
3. Look past the first page