# Using Wikipedia to help with research

1. Understand **how Wikipedia works**:
    - Wikipedia is the **largest free online encyclopedia** in the world.
    - Tens of thousands of **volunteers (Wikipedians)** work together to create, edit and maintain Wikipedia articles.
    - Wikipedians must abide by certain **rules and principles** in order for their work to be accepted by the Wikipedia community – most importantly, information in articles must be **verifiable** and be presented **from a neutral point of view**.
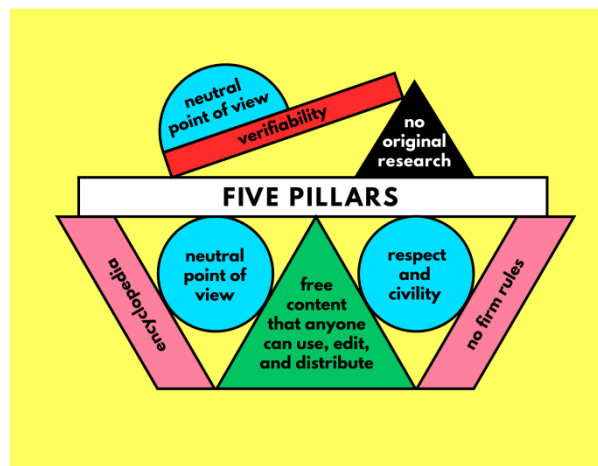
Author: Lfurter
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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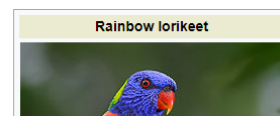2. Look at the **reference / citation list**:
    - **How many** sources are there? (only having one or two can signify an article that may not be as reliable as others with more sources)
    - Are the sources relatively **current** and **varied**?
    - Are the sources written by **trustworthy authors or organisations**?

3. Investigate the '**Talk**' tab and the '**View History**' tab:
    - ➢ Find out **when the last revisions were made** and what they were.
    - ➢ Find out if any parts of the article have been **discussed** and why.
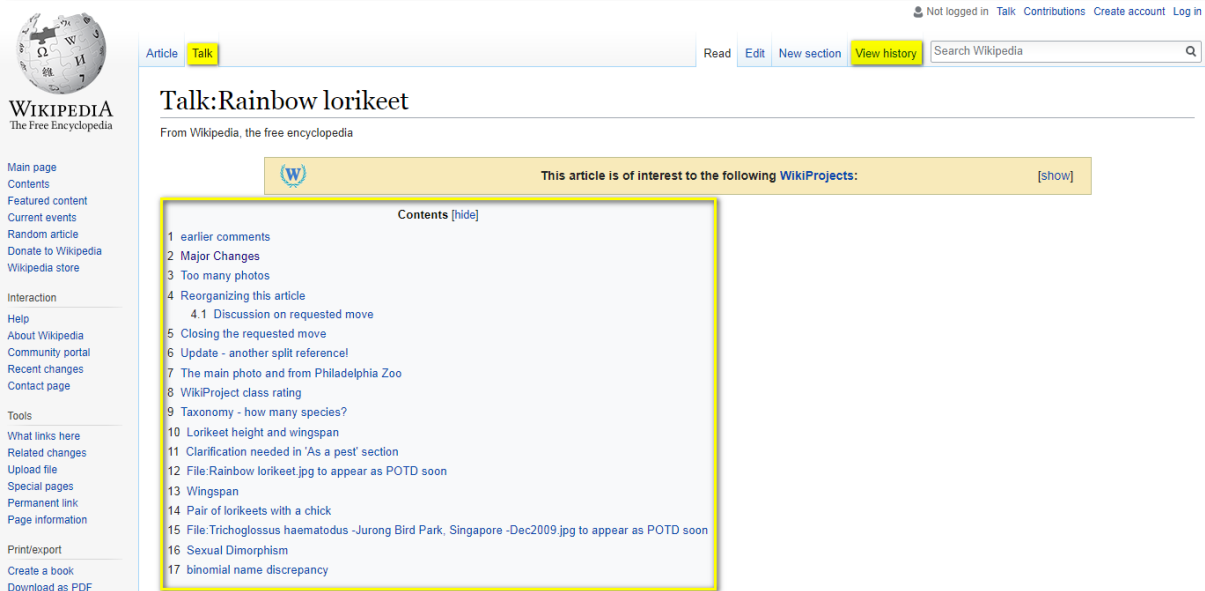
4. Use Wikipedia articles to **begin or continue research**:
    - ➢ Use the **headings**, **subheadings** and **information** as ideas for further research.
    - ➢ Find **other sources that confirm the information** in the Wikipedia article.
    - ➢ **Click links in References list** to search the article's sources.
    - ➢ As edits can be made at any time to a Wikipedia article, it is much **safer to use information from other published sources** in your work instead of the Wikipedia article itself.
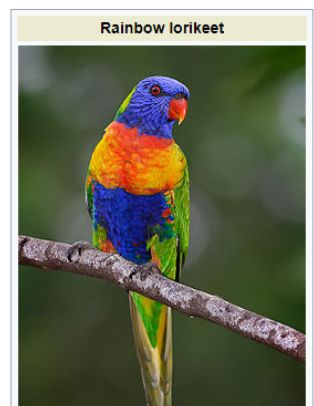
Top tip for using Wikipedia!
   - • Remember that Wikipedia is a great tool to help you with your research, but it should never be the one and only source you use for information. As with any research project, you must **use a range of reliable, quality sources**. Check out our other **help resources** to guide you.