

This is supplementary material for the webtext “Wikipedia as Editorial Microcosm” by Joshua DiCaglio et al., published in *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*, 29(1), available at <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/29.1/topoi/dicaglio-et-al/index.html>.

Essay-Like Articles (WP:NOTESSAY)

As we discussed in “The Problem for Wikipedia” document, one significant problem Wikipedia has is articles being posted that are essentially essays or are otherwise essay-like. The difficulty is that essays often contain great information, good overviews, and verifiable sources. However, they need to be converted into the structure, tone, and form of a wikipedia article. This can be a large task since it requires extensive bold edits. However, it is essential that someone do this revision since essay-like articles will often restrict future improvements to the article.

If you have selected or found an article that fits this category (whether or not it is actually tagged with WP:NOTESSAY), here is some guidance.

Policy Pages

- ★ [WP:NOTESSAY](#) (a subpage of WP:NOT)
- ★ WP:OR
- ★ [WP:TONE](#)

Major Issues

1. Identifying articles that evolved from essays

Sometimes it will be readily apparent that an article is an essay.

Example: [Art in World War II](#) (before a student radically revised it) reads exactly like an essay, beginning from the first sentence.

Sometimes an article might have been originally posted as an essay, but it continues to develop without a full conversion to appropriate Wikipedia form.

Example below: Gender in Horror Films -- [Before](#)

This one evolved a bit from an original essay-like form, but still has many of the signs of having been an essay (the form of a thesis is still prevalent in the lead and in the structure of the entire article, for example)

Slasher films, such as *Friday the 13th*, *He Knows You're Alone*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, and *Prom Night*, feature acts of extreme violence portrayed in graphic detail. "The slasher film typically involves a killer who stalks and graphically murders a series of victims in a typically random, unprovoked fashion. The victims are usually teenagers or young adults who are away from mainstream civilization or far away from help. These films typically begin with the murder of a young woman and end with a one female survivor who manages to subdue the killer, only to discover that the problem has not been completely solved".^[1] Critics and researchers have claimed that these films portray: (1) Acts of extreme violence displayed in graphic detail^[2] (2) they are labeled as "women-in-danger" or "violence-to-women" films because women are singled out for injury and death and (3) scenes in these films are couples with explicit violence that contain sexual or erotic images^[3] encroaching vigorously on the verge of pornography.^[4] Carol Clover's *Men, Women, and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* is generally thought of to be the cornerstone work of studying gender in slasher films.

Contents [hide]	
1	Women vs. men
2	Sex and violence
3	Effects on viewers
4	See also
5	References

Your article's history will usually make this evolution from an essay-like article clear, if the article itself does not. See the example below from the [Woman in the Enlightenment](#) article's [history](#)

This article's edits included a direct reference to the essay-like writing, but this is not always the case. Instead, you can find common key issues that would be prevalent on an article in violation of WP:NOTESSAY. These are highlighted below, and are not limited to these common "red flags," but spotting issues like these are important to correcting an article's essay-ness.

(tone, direct quotes [violation WP:MOS], and "information" that "doesn't make sense" -i.e. writing that deviates from the punctuality of a Wiki article, common to essay writing-)

- (cur | prev) ○ 17:49, 4 March 2018 H Case (talk | contribs) . . (12,105 bytes) **(-1,167)** . . (→*Debating societies: Refined* section to encyclopedia tone, removed direct quotes) (undo | thank) (Tag: Visual edit)
- (cur | prev) ○ 17:20, 4 March 2018 H Case (talk | contribs) . . (13,272 bytes) **(-2,088)** . . (→*Salons: Made Coffeehouse* section independent, removed direct quotes, citations) (undo | thank) (Tag: Visual edit)
- (cur | prev) ○ 01:09, 4 March 2018 AnomieBOT (talk | contribs) . . (15,360 bytes) (+130) . . (*Rescuing orphaned refs ("Lilti, Antoine p.7" from rev 823009198)*) (undo)
- (cur | prev) ○ 23:00, 3 March 2018 H Case (talk | contribs) . . (15,230 bytes) **(-2,374)** . . (*Refined* lead and Salons section to read less like an essay, cut down some extensive content, reworded for better understanding) (undo | thank) (Tags: Visual edit, nowiki added)
- (cur | prev) ○ 00:57, 5 June 2016 Dominick8 (talk | contribs) . . (17,601 bytes) **(-1,425)** . . (*Removed Information in lead section that didn't make sense, someone else can look at diff and reincorporate if wanted.*) (undo | thank)

2. Partial sections might also be essay-like.

In these cases you might or might not see the essay-like tag but they have some of the same issues in tone, focus, and organization.

Example: [Forestry article](#) all sections and the lead need to be rewritten in order to address the essay-tone and organization within

3. Revising an essay-like article or section

The major challenge here is to **keep all the legitimate and useful contributions while boldly reworking the whole structure and tone.**

Chances are you will be the first who has thought with much detail about what actually should go into such an article and how it should be positioned from a perspective of Wikipedia.

- Be sure to consult WP:NOT as you figure out how to resituate the article
- Watch out for original research (WP:OR) and make sure that statements are verified (WP:V) as needed.
- Consult WP:TONE to figure out how to conform the tone to satisfy WP:NPOV
- Try to highlight these bigger questions and start a direct discussion of them in the Talk page. If it is not well-trafficked, at the least explain the approach you've taken to rework it from the essay form so that future editors can see how this was done.

You can cite WP:NOTESSAY (a subsection of WP:NOT) to justify your edits.

For a good example, see these student changes:

Gender in Horror Films article ([Before](#), [After](#))

Art in World War II ([Before](#), [After](#))

4. You don't have to fix everything

Focus on making the boldest changes in structure and tone while fielding the major conceptual or content issues so that future editors can continue to work on the topic.

A successful version of this editing will make it possible for other editors to add to the article in a way that is appropriate for the topic (including students in other courses).

Thus, the Gender in Horror films article continued to improve greatly following the student project. [As of 2020](#) + [Current Version](#)

Other examples:

- Feminist Film Theory
 - a) [Before](#) + [After](#)
- 1919 Actor's Equity Association Strike
 - a) [Before](#) + [After](#)
- World War II U.S. Military Sex Education
 - [Before](#) + [After](#)
- Women in the Enlightenment
 - [Before](#) + [After](#)
- Horrible Histories
 - [Before](#) + [After](#)
- Fantasy
 - [Before](#) + [After](#)