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WP:NOR -- No Original Research

“No original research” (OR) is one of three Core Content Policies on Wikipedia. OR is defined as “material—such as facts, allegations, and ideas—for which no reliable, published sources exist.” However, the identification of OR can often be tricky and it can be unclear how to fix it. After all, how do you really know if something is truly original research? How do you know that no reliable, published source exists for a claim--what if it just hasn’t been appropriately cited (then it would violate [WP:Verifiability](#), not be OR, although the two are related)?

Of course, in many cases OR is obvious and easily removed. The issue is identifying these issues and then making clear why there is an OR problem and figuring out the best way to remove it.

Policy Pages

[WP:No original research](#) (aka WP:NOR)

[WP:Verifiability](#) (aka WP:V)

Major Issues

Original research is often subtle. Here are three kinds of OR that you may find with some examples.

1. Claims that are made about a subject without citations or sources

While unsourced factual claims or general conceptual claims are usually easy to spot, sometimes OR will be harder to find and will exist on the sentence-level. For the examples below, these sentences present ideas about the subject that are not founded in reliable, published sources. They make (opinionated) claims about the subject without a source to back them up. Therefore, they violate the policy and **should be removed** from the article.

Example: *Memoirs of Carwin the Biloquist* ([Before](#) + [After](#)) - The issue with this article is there is evidence it was transferred to Wikipedia as an essay, which is a common creator of OR issues.

- “The common connection to the two novels is the character Carwin and his mysterious biloquial abilities. *Carwin* attempts to develop the history and background of Carwin prior to his appearance in *Wieland* as a way of clarifying some of the uncertainty that surrounds Carwin throughout *Wieland*.”
- “*Memoirs of Carwin the Biloquist* attempts to make a mysterious character a little more understandable, but in never finishing his story, Brown actually leaves the life of Carwin more

unexplained and unresolved than it was after the completion of *Wieland; or The Transformation*.”

Example: The Kiss (Klimt) ([Before](#) + [After](#))

- “Love, intimacy, and sexuality are common themes found in Gustav Klimt’s works.”
- “The patterning suggests the style of [Art Nouveau](#) and the organic forms of the [Arts and Crafts](#) movement.”

Example: Achilles and Patroclus ([Before](#)) Sometimes you will find an article where the lead can clue you in to look closer for more OR in the article. See the lead in this article for a great example of un-based claims made by the article’s writer.

- “The relationship between Achilles and Patroclus is a key element of the stories associated with the Trojan War.”
- “In the *Iliad*, Homer describes a deep and meaningful relationship between Achilles and Patroclus, where Achilles is tender toward Patroclus but callous and arrogant toward others.”
(**Note:** this is also an example of information not being situated in relation to a source)

2. Analysis of a subject that is not situated in relation to a source

Many general claims and most analyses of topics are classified as WP:NOR unless they are situated as the published claims of experts. In the case of the example below, the analysis of the characters in the play that the article discusses is a violation of this policy and should be removed. This can be justified because there are no sources, leading editors to believe that these are personal analyses done by the article’s writer.

Example: Amy's View -- [Before](#)

Analysis

When analyzing characters of a play, they can be looked at in three different ways: literally, functionally, and symbolically.^[11] The above character guide serves as the literal descriptions, while the below details the function and symbolic elements of the main characters.

Amy serves as the protagonist throughout the play. Amy is the focus of the play, as the title bears her name and she is constantly trying to just make everything work. All of the major events are centered around her as she works her way through the tangle of relationships with Dominic and her mother. She is taken advantage of by Dominic and her relationship is rejected by her mother – she has done nothing wrong and yet is being abused, attacked, and dismissed at every step.

Esme could also be seen as the protagonist, but she is more accurately the agent of action – the one that sets things rolling and makes things happen. She is the one that tells Dominic of Amy's pregnancy, and she is the one who seems to react to Dominic's one-sided commentary on theatre and media. She also acts as a confidant to Amy, since Amy always seems to be visiting her mother when something in her life has gone wrong and she needs advice and consoling.

Dominic is the antagonist. He stands in the way of almost everyone in the play. He is not fully committed to Amy, and therefore keeps her from achieving her full potential as a partner to him. He is a hindrance to Esme, whom he is at odds with over the issue of the theater, and he causes additional problems by creating a barrier between Esme and Amy.

Example: 23 Blast [Before](#) and [After](#) - In the process of getting this article into a more appropriate shape, the problems with origins research

“ 23 *Blast* is at its heart a slice-of-life story. As young boys, Travis and Jerry meet on the football field. They are testing themselves against others, and find in their on-the-field talents a bond that extends beyond the game. When the complexity of [adolescence](#) disrupts their lives and jeopardizes that friendship, both boys are forced to grow up. Life isn't fair to either of them: Travis loses his vision and Jerry loses his place on the team without his friend to guide and help him. This theme of identity is visited often in 23 *Blast*.^[8]”

The question is: does this citation do enough to alleviate OR concerns? It might be enough!

Note: You can often fix these issues by resituating the analysis as being claimed by someone else. If you do not know who makes these claims, the content might need to be removed.

3. Relational claims made that lead readers to jump to conclusions about a subject
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Sometimes the writing of an article, or section of an article, will lead the reader to believe something is true by the way that a section is phrased. In the example below, the statement that Steve Jobs died of pancreas cancer right after a sentence on Ashton Kutcher's pancreas levels going "out of whack" leads readers to believe that the fruitarian diet Jobs followed led to his death -- which would be considered original research since there are no sources to back up that claim.

Example: [Fruitarianism \(Before + After\)](#)

- "Actor Ashton Kutcher was hospitalized and said that his pancreas levels went "all out of whack" after following a fruitarian diet in preparation for his role playing Apple Inc. CEO and onetime fruitarian Steve Jobs, in the film *Jobs*. Jobs died of pancreatic cancer."

This is more relational NOR since the position that the last sentence was placed in leads readers to think that the Fruitarian diet Steve Jobs followed was responsible for his pancreatic cancer and subsequent death.

Addressing Original research

As with NPOV, addressing original research often requires some diplomacy. Some strategies:

- You will sometimes be able to fix the OR by simply modifying the sentence to take out the part that is new and unsourced.
- A common way to avoid OR is to put the opinion in the voice of a third party, as long as they are a notable and valid source.
 - We see this all the time in movie and book articles: they put responses to the movie directly in relation to critics. But it is often hard to do this in "Themes" sections of books; there you'd need to actually put the opinions in relation to who says them: "X analyzes the book according to Y" rather than "The book means Y"
- Sometimes extensive or unnecessary OR just needs to be deleted. However, if there is a chance for it to be sourced, then it might be worth keeping. You make a call, but if you decide to delete, make sure you note it on the page's talk page and leave some room for discussion.
- Sometimes haggling over OR is not worth it. Thus, for the example for [Fruitarianism](#) above, when the student attempted to point out this OR to the other editors on the [talk page](#), they argued that it wasn't OR. I still think it is a subtle example of OR, and particularly important because it appears to be making an implied claim to medical causality, but after some significant push-back it ultimately wasn't worth pushing further, particularly since the stakes and notability of this article is quite low, all things considered. But imagine if this was the article on yoga or climate change...then the stakes would be far more important.

