

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>.

Neutral Point of View (WP:NPOV)

Neutral point of view is one of the pillars of Wikipedia. Still, identifying and alleviating NPOV problems can be difficult. This document is to assist you in working with NPOV issues.

Policy Pages

[WP:Neutral point of view](#)
[MOS/Words to Watch](#)

Major Issues

NPOV issues manifest in many different ways, but here are three common forms that arise in this project.

1. An article might be biased toward an organization

Some articles are written in a way that causes a bias toward the subject of the article. This is problematic in Wikipedia because it is an encyclopedia that should be giving neutral information regarding a wide range of topics.

United States of America Cricket Association ([before](#) and [after](#)) - **Word choice matters!**

“Unfortunately, the administration of the USACA has **proved unable** to administer the sport in the United States effectively.”

“This failure **robbed** the USA of the price of full One Day International status on offer to the World Cup qualifiers. This failure was **compounded** on 9 August 2005 when the ICC **expelled** the USA from the 2005 ICC Intercontinental Cup.”

2. Some writing might influence the way readers view a subject

Some sentences are written in a way that leaves no room for interpretation by the reader. For example, below the writer creates a call to action with the statement, “Governments must...” thus impressing a belief onto the reader. Wikipedia is not about making decisions about how people should view things, but should instead present information in a neutral and unbiased way so that readers may be informed and form their own opinions.

Human rights education

“Governments must see to it that it must be exercised without bias to race, gender, color, religion, language, national or social origin, political or personal opinion, birth, or any status.”

In the following subsection, “Criticism,” the writer has presented information that creates the sense that schools are doing something wrong. On the larger scale of the article, it does not present criticism for the topic of Human rights education, but criticism of the school system. There could be room for an examination of this topic on this page, but under this current context it breaks NPOV by imparting the writer’s belief onto the reader.

Criticism

Sudbury model of democratic education schools maintain that values, human rights included, must be learned through experience^{[49][50][51][52]} as Aristotle said: “For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them.”^[53] They adduce that for this purpose schools must encourage ethical behavior and personal responsibility. In order to achieve these goals schools must respect human rights in school by allowing students the three great freedoms—freedom of choice, freedom of action and freedom to bear the results of action—that constitute personal responsibility.^[54]

Example: Food Blogging ([Before](#) + [After](#))

A similar example of NPOV violation writing where the student was able to remedy the issues by carefully rewriting the information so it does not carry the writer’s voice within it.

“Food and travel is a particularly compelling type of food blogging because it involves the engagement of different cultures.”

“as well as lesser known hot food spots like Istanbul,…”

“These blog hosts bear the challenge of embracing other cultures and experiences, even if that means stepping out of their comfort zone.”^[5] (Note: this sentence came with a source, but that does not mean that the information does not break NPOV.)

-See the handout on Tone for more on these kinds of NPOV issues. Also [MOS/Words to Watch](#)

3. Word Choice may influence readers’ view on parts of the subject

Sometimes specific words in a sentence make it non-neutral. In the example below, words like “vicious” and “cheerfully” paint a different picture of the events happening within this particular story. Plot summaries should be neutral, just like the rest of the article.

Pride and Prejudice and Zombies ([Before](#) + [After](#))

“The scene culminates in a vicious verbal and physical fight...”

“They cheerfully wipe out a dozen zombies, are married, and begin a long and happy future together...”

Fixing NPOV Issues

NPOV can be subtle and located at the sentence-level. Usually with these, you can fix things yourself by just rephrasing.

Sometimes NPOV is widespread and reflected in the larger content or organization - dig through the Human rights education article to see a great example of this. In these cases, be sure to be communicative about such major changes, in the talk pages and edit summaries as necessary.

A reminder: you can always use WP:NPOV to directly cite the policy page here and back up your edits. To make it an internal link, you would write [[WP:NPOV]]. This works even in the edit summaries.