

Wiki Roles

The following roles describe the work that needs to be done to make your wiki page truly outstanding. Divide up these tasks between the members of your group and work hard to make your final product amazing. Remember that you should visit your group's wiki page on a regular basis to complete your assigned tasks. Wikis change all the time—which means you're almost always likely to have more work to do!

The Link Layer: One of the characteristics of high quality wikis is a heaping cheese-load worth of links to outside sources. Links are essential on any website that you create because they allow readers to explore the topic that you're discussing on their own---and to validate that the information you share is accurate. The link layer of your group is responsible for all of the links included in your document. Link layers should begin by identifying logical places to include links in your group's work. They should also check each source that you link to for bias and/or accuracy---and be willing to replace any questionable links included in your group's work. Link layers [should use the checklist found here](#) to evaluate the websites included in your group's document.

The Flow Master: Have you ever finished reading a piece of text and been completely and totally confused? Have you ever had to read something three or four different times before you could even begin to understand what the author was trying to say? Frustrating, wasn't it?! The flow master of your group is completely responsible for reviewing your work to make sure that your readers aren't left confused. They should be on the constant lookout for sentences that just plain don't make sense or places that make readers go, "Huh?" The flow master should read---and reread---and reread again and again and again---after all, wikis change every day. If there are any text sections that need clarifying, the flow master should make revisions that improve the "readability" of your group's document.

The Spelling Cop: Nothing ruins a good piece more than 8,000 spelling errors. It's simply impossible to be convincing when you can't spell anything correctly! Readers will stop thinking you're an expert after two---or maybe three---spelling errors. The spelling cop of your group has a seemingly simple job: Checking the spelling of every single word that is added to your group's document. The spelling cop had better be persistent, though---every time that your page is revised is another chance for a word to be misspelled!

The Discussion Starter: Good group projects start and end with conversations. After all, how can you really work together if you don't take the time to talk to one another about what you're producing?! To make sure that conversations are a part of the work you do on this wiki, you're going to need a discussion starter. Your discussion starter's home is going to be the discussion board of your group's page. Their job: To ask constant questions about what it is that your group is producing. Discussion starters should be good evaluators, checking your page against the pages produced by other groups and finding ways that your work could be improved. They should also be good planners, helping their group to set due dates and complete required tasks.

Captain Spit-and-Polish: Exactly how much time would you spend at a website that included no graphics or interactive features? How much time would you spend on a website that didn't include paragraph breaks or proper spacing between words? What

about on a website that just plain didn't look interesting? Right: None! Think about all of those pages that you land on and leave in two clicks. Your group's Captain Spit-and-Polish is in charge of making sure that doesn't happen to you! They need to find images and graphics that support the arguments your group is making and to make sure that your layout is professional and interesting. The trickiest part of being Captain Spit-and-Polish is remembering who the audience for your page is---and making sure that your graphics, images and layout is appropriate for that specific group of people! The kinds of pages that appeal to twelve year olds probably won't appeal to anyone over 22!

Remember that regardless of the role that you are assigned, your wiki page is a group project—so if you can help a partner complete their task too, you're really just helping yourself! When you come across resources or ideas that might improve your final product, be sure to use the discussion board of your group's page to share ideas.

Created by Bill Ferriter