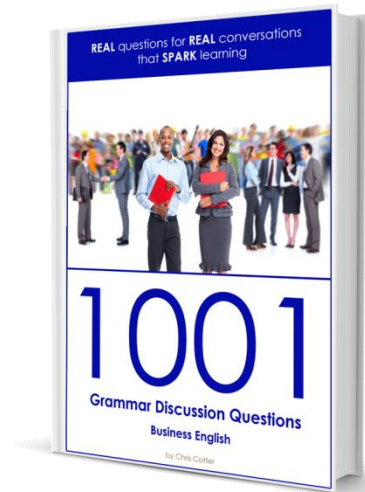
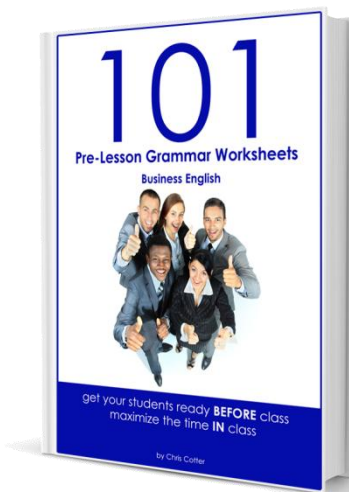
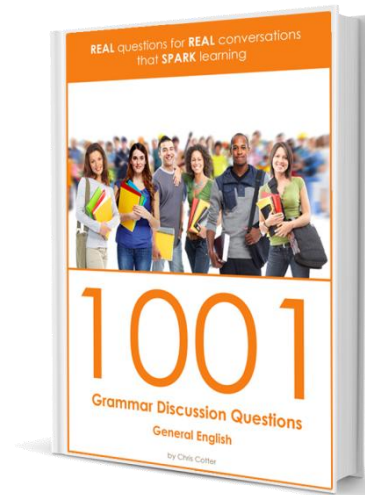
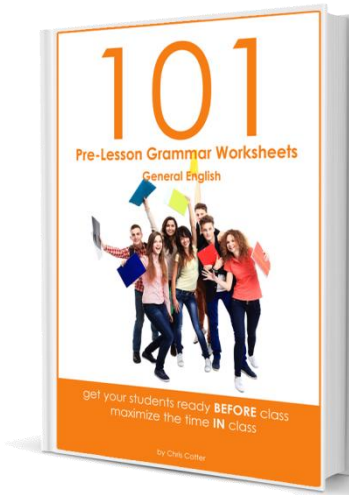
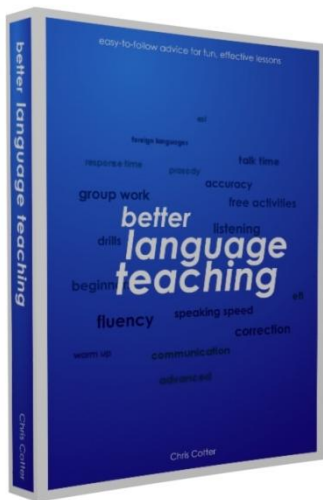


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the ARTICLE (for teachers)

Wikipedia as an Educational Tool

Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia in which anyone with an Internet connection can add new entries or amend existing ones. There are more than ten million articles in over 253 languages, a behemoth when compared to a well-established encyclopedia such as Britannica, which has only 500,000 entries. But given the fact that anyone can make changes to the content, specious and subjective information can and does appear. University professors have been inclined to forbid students from using the source, at least until now.

At the University of British Columbia, Jon Beasley-Murray allowed his students to write entries for the online encyclopedia in lieu of the usual term paper assignment. One student said it was initially daunting to work online, where anyone could watch. But she found the assignment exciting and meaningful, significantly more so than a term paper which often gets filed away forgotten once the semester ends. A second student revised his entry 1,000 times, and a third student regularly slaved away at the project until the early hours of the morning.

As a means to improve the quality of the content, Wikipedia has begun to run featured articles each day on its homepage. Featured articles "provide thorough, well-written coverage of their content, supported by many peer-reviewed publications." Of all the entries at Wikipedia, only about 2,000 have been designated for this top rank, a very small percentage of the total. It's an issue of great concern to the encyclopedia.

Beasley-Murray's class did quite well. Of the students who took up the assignment, three entries worked on by nine students made featured article status. Unfortunately, a few students had their work instantly deleted by other users. Overall, though, most agreed that it was a great learning experience.

Teacher's Notes:

* Underlined words in red typeface are the answers.

the Article (for students)

Listen and fill in the missing sentences. Compare your answers with a partner, and then listen once more.

Wikipedia as an Educational Tool

a) _____ . There are more than ten million articles in over 253 languages, a behemoth when compared to a well-established encyclopedia such as Britannica, which has only 500,000 entries. But given the fact that anyone can make changes to the content, specious and subjective information can and does appear. b) _____ , at least until now.

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Notes:

STEP ONE

Discuss: Do you agree or disagree? Why?

a.	I often contribute to blogs and forums on the Internet.
b.	I would like to write an article or a blog on a topic I know very well.
c.	The Internet is my main source of news and information.
d.	There's a lot of interesting information on the Internet, but it's not suitable for academia.
e.	The Internet will become an important teaching tool in the future.

STEP TWO

Questions: Read as much of the article as you can in two minutes. Guess the answers to the questions below, then listen to your teacher read the article. Try to confirm your answers.

a.	What is Wikipedia?
b.	Why don't universities usually let students use the online encyclopedia?
c.	What happened at the University of British Columbia?
d.	According to the article, how did the students feel about writing entries for Wikipedia?
e.	What requirements are needed for feature article status?

STEP THREE

Fill in the Blanks: Listen and fill in the missing sentences. Compare answers with a partner, and then listen once more.

STEP FOUR

Summarize: Work with a partner to summarize the article in your own words.

STEP FIVE

Discuss: Talk about the following questions in pairs/groups. Remember to support your answers!

a.	Did you like this article?
b.	Would you ever consider (or have you considered) writing for Wikipedia? Why/not?
c.	Would you ever consider (or have you considered) writing a blog for others to read? Why/not?
d.	If you were a professor, would you allow students to use Wikipedia for term papers and essays?