

# WRITING

**This section measures your ability to write in English to communicate in an academic environment.**

**There are two writing questions in this section.**

**For question 1, you will read a passage and listen to a lecture about the same topic. You may take notes while you read and listen. Then you will write a response to a question based on what you have read and heard. You may look back at the passage when answering the question. You may use your notes to help you answer the question. You have 20 minutes to plan and write your response.**

**For question 2, you will write an essay based on your own knowledge and experience. You have 30 minutes to plan and complete your essay.**



1. **Directions:** Give yourself 3 minutes to read the passage.

Reading Time: 3 minutes

Communal online encyclopedias represent one of the latest resources to be found on the Internet. They are in many respects like traditional printed encyclopedias: collections of articles on various subjects. What is specific to these online encyclopedias, however, is that any Internet user can contribute a new article or make an editorial change in an existing one. As a result, the encyclopedia is authored by the whole community of Internet users. The idea might sound attractive, but the communal online encyclopedias have several important problems that make them much less valuable than traditional, printed encyclopedias.

First, contributors to a communal online encyclopedia often lack academic credentials, thereby making their contributions partially informed at best and downright inaccurate in many cases. Traditional encyclopedias are written by trained experts who adhere to standards of academic rigor that nonspecialists cannot really achieve.

Second, even if the original entry in the online encyclopedia is correct, the communal nature of these online encyclopedias gives unscrupulous users and vandals or hackers the opportunity to fabricate, delete, and corrupt information in the encyclopedia. Once changes have been made to the original text, an unsuspecting user cannot tell the entry has been tampered with. None of this is possible with a traditional encyclopedia.

Third, the communal encyclopedias focus too frequently, and in too great a depth, on trivial and popular topics, which creates a false impression of what is important and what is not. A child doing research for a school project may discover that a major historical event receives as much attention in an online encyclopedia as, say, a single long-running television program. The traditional encyclopedia provides a considered view of what topics to include or exclude and contains a sense of proportion that online "democratic" communal encyclopedias do not.

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