ONLINE ENCYCLOPEDIA ENTRY GUIDELINES
BlackPast.org (www.blackpast.org)
Revised, August 1, 2013

Here are the basic guidelines.

 1) Each encyclopedia entry should be approximately 500 words in total, (including title, sources, contributor information, etc). Always put the significance of the person, event or organization you are writing on in the first sentence of your entry, e.g., John Smith, the first African American elected to Congress from Idaho, was born in Pocatello in 1953.

 2) Each entry must be your original work. Do not copy information from other websites such as *Wikipedia.* You should, however review Wikipedia and similar websites to see what has previously been written on your subject. Consult a variety of text and internet sources. Even when you are citing your own work as the major source, please submit your entry with at least one or two additional text or internet sources.

 3) Avoid "editorial comments" or information that cannot be verified in your entry such as "her career was destroyed by white racism" or "he was the greatest athlete, musician, artist, etc., of all time." Be precise and specific. Remember, you have only 500 words to describe the individual you are profiling. Use those words carefully and wisely to discuss the person's history and his or her accomplishments and significance. Do not use your entry as a forum to provide your opinion of the person's life, work, or historical significance.

If there is limited information your encyclopedia entry may be less than 400 words. A short, precise, accurate entry is far superior to a 500 word entry filled with editorial comments and vague declarations designed primarily to meet the word count.

 4) Each entry of an individual should have her\his birth date and death in the title, *e.g., Smith, Jane Tyler (1918-1957).* If the individual is known by another name you should write: **Smith, Jane/Stagecoach Jane.** Be sure to include the name in the entry title that best identifies the individual and that lends itself to precise searches on the web, e.g., **Smith, Jane Tyler** rather than simply **Smith, Jane. If there is no middle name, list the middle initial.**

Titles of organizations should appear with their founding dates, e.g. **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (1909--   )**

Events should be titled as follows, **The Omaha Courthouse Riot, 1919.**

Concepts should be titled as follows: **Pan-Africanism**.

5) Each entry should include when possible the name of the parents of the individual profiled, the number of siblings in the family, and the spouse and children, if any of the subject of your profile. In other words, be sure to have basic family information when available. Your entry should also always have the specific day, month, and place (city) of the subject's birth and death.

6) Please provide at least two text sources (books or articles) including your own work. You may cite one website source but avoid citing **only** sources from the internet. Do not cite websites, for example, that are simply online versions of major printed texts such as the *Encyclopedia Britannia*. Instead cite the original text. If you are citing a website source be sure to include the URL so it can be linked it directly to your entry. Make sure the links work before you submit your entry.

All sources will appear on your entry just above your name. Remember, you should have no more than three sources. Think of these sources as the places where you found the best information on your subject as well as sites for additional information on the persons or events profiled *rather than* as "endnotes" or citations for your entry text.

7) Each entry should follow our standard website style. That means the entry title is in bold type at the left margin with only the first letter of the name capitalized, followed by relevant dates.

Smith, John (1830-1890)

Your paragraphs should **not** be indented. Instead there should be a single line separating the paragraphs.

You should italicize only the book title or journal title in your sources. The following examples are written in the style appropriate for the website.

For Books:
John Smith, *Black History* (New York: New Publishing Company, 1999).

For Articles:
John Smith, "Article in Journal," *Journal Title* 54:2 (Fall 2004)

For Websites:
<u>http://www.blackhistory.com</u>.

There should always be a semicolon between citations, e.g., John Smith, *Black History in the West* (New York: New Publishing Company, 1999)**;** John Smith, "Article in Journal," *Journal Title* 54:2 (Fall 2004).

8**) Always spell out the name of an organization/political entity when it is used for the first time in an entry.** For the NAACP, for example, spell out the name of the organization followed by the initials in parenthesis, e.g., National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). For all subsequent references in the entry, NAACP is appropriate.

Remember, BlackPast.org visitors are from around the world. Do not assume that they will automatically know abbreviations which are generally familiar to us. Do not use state initials such as KY for Kentucky, for example. Spell out the name of the state each time it is used in the entry.

9) Please submit the entry in a Word file. Single space your entry and be sure to include your name and your institutional affiliation, e.g., college, museum, public school, or historical society at the **end** of each profile you write. If you do not wish to list an affiliation with any organization or institution, you will be listed as *"Independent Historian"* in that space unless you instruct otherwise.

Example:

Contributor(s):
John Smith
University of Washington, Seattle

10) Although there will be copyediting, please do your best to provide an entry that is free of typos, misspellings, and grammatical errors.

11) Contributors are no longer required to provide a photo of the subject (individual or event) of their entry. If you think, however, that you have found a particularly interesting image, please send it as a jpeg. Be sure to include the copyright information so that we can request permission to use the image. If it was made before 1925 it is in the public domain and thus permission is not necessary.

12) You are required to provide a biography (no more than 200 words) and a photograph. Send in your own biography in a Word file. Your bio will appear on your bio page which will be linked to every encyclopedia entry you contribute. Your bio should have your email address and a URL for your website if you have one. Indicate whether you want your work or home email address to appear on the bio page. Also indicate if you don't want either to be included. In that instance the website address, blackpast@blackpast.org, will be used and messages sent there can be forwarded from the BlackPast.org staff to you.

13) Send in your personal photo separately as a jpeg. The photo can be in color or black and white but it must be at least 40 KB so that the image is large enough to be cropped and to show clearly on the website. Do not send images that are 1 meg or larger as they cannot be accommodated by website software. Do not use cell phone images or send in blurry, "soft focus," or glamour shot images as they are not professionally acceptable. Also avoid cropped images that show part of someone else, images where your face is partly hidden by hats, shades, scarves, etc., images taken in your car, bedroom, at the swimming pool, at the gym, with your relatives, etc. Such images are inappropriate for BlackPast.org. A "head shot" with you looking straight ahead is appropriate.

Please send the *photo and bio* **before** you send your first entry.

14) If your email address changes because you move or switch institutional affiliation, please let the website staff know as soon as possible. In fact we suggest you update your bio annually to reflect any changes in your status.
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Thank you for agreeing to write for BlackPast.org (www.blackpast.org)