MAN: Hey, Mike, can I ask you a question?

MIKE: Of course.

MAN: Do you know about Wikipedia?

MIKE: Doesn't everyone?

MAN: Good point. So I guess my question is whether Wikipedia is a legitimate source to use for a paper or research project.

MIKE: That's a great question. Let me ask you this. Do you know how Wikipedia works?

MAN: Sure. It's a crowd-sourced online encyclopedia. So anyone can edit any page to make it as thorough and up-to-date as possible.

MIKE: That's exactly right. But consider the wide range of writers online. Journalists, bloggers, pranksters, angry people in the comments section, et cetera. Do you see what I'm getting at?

MAN: Yeah. If anyone can edit Wikipedia, then it's possible that a lot of the information there isn't necessarily reliable.

MAN: My point exactly. Now in all fairness, Wikipedia does have moderators who try to keep things factual. And they do a pretty good job. But the number of articles and people who are able to edit them is so massive, the moderators can only do so much.

As a result, most instructors have real concerns about using Wikipedia as a source. You should generally assume that [INAUDIBLE] need to rely on other, more concrete sources of information.

MAN: OK. Good to know.

MIKE: However, using Wikipedia as a jumping-off point for your research can actually be quite useful. You can get a general overview of the subject you're addressing. Just be sure to confirm any information you find that isn't common knowledge.

Also, be sure to look at the citations at the bottom of each entry. They can lead you to a lot of good sources.

MAN: That sounds like a solid place to start. Thanks, Mike.

MIKE: Any time.