

# *A User's Guide to the Enduring Visions Wiki*

First of all, in case you have forgotten, the website is:

[www.EnduringVisions.wikispaces.org](http://www.EnduringVisions.wikispaces.org).

Second, let me make a general comment to alleviate any fear that you may be experiencing about using the Wiki. I know when I work on anything (my car, computer, etc), one of my primary concerns is not messing it up worse than it was before. Perhaps you are worried about “messing up” the wiki – deleting something, moving stuff around accidentally, and making people angry. Have no fear! That is one of the best things about a wiki: it saves, in some format, everything that is ever done. So even if you delete something (and did not mean to), or move something (that was not supposed to be moved), it can easily be fixed back to the way it was. So get in there and experiment!

## *1. Basic Information: The Home Page, Dashboard, and Menus*

When the Enduring Visions wiki comes up, the first thing you will see is what is called the Home Page. Along the top left of the page in the green section are three options that you can choose: “New Page”, “Recent Changes,” and “Manage Wiki.” If you wanted to create a whole new page to be a part of the wiki, you can do that by clicking on “New Page.” I would only recommend doing that, for now, if there is some material for a different era that you would like to share now. For example: Year One of the TAH grant covers Eras One and Five; next year will be Eras Two and Six. But what if you have a fantastic activity for the American Revolution that you want to share now (that Era is not scheduled to be covered until Year Three)? Go ahead and create a new page, and post your information there. Then, when we get to that Year, the Wiki Manager will handle moving the material to its new home. “Recent Changes” is a fast way to see what has been added to the wiki within a short period of time, so if you have not chosen to “monitor” the wiki, clicking this option is a good way to make sure that you are not missing a discussion, activity, or question of which you were unaware. If you would like the wiki to let you know every time someone makes a change to the wiki, click on the “Notify Me” option on the “Recent Changes” page. You will then have the option to be notified, via email, if there are changes to a page, a discussion, and/or file uploads. Just make sure to click “Update” after your selections for notifications have been made. There will not be much that you can do under the “Manage Wiki” section, as that is mainly for the Wiki Manager.

There are several more options along the top right of the green section of the Home Page: “Enduring Visions,” “My Wikis,” an image of a letter envelope, “My Account,” “Help,” “Sign Out,” and a Wikispaces image. I will deal with each of these options below.

When you click on “Enduring Visions,” you are taken away from the main site to a site that is based around your account with Wikispaces, the company that manages and runs all of the computers that host the wikis. This first section is entitled the “Dashboard,” as it is full of information for all of your activities. One section is entitled “Favorite Wikis.” Enduring Visions should be located there (and if you click on the name, it will take you back to the Home Page). If you have subscribed to other wikis, they will be listed there as well. There is a section that tells you what wikis you are monitoring, and another for “News” and “Community” (both of these are

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ted to the entire Wikispaces universe, and have nothing to do specifically with the Enduring Visions wiki). On the “Dashboard” you will also see a button along the top right that says “Create a New Wiki.” Clicking on this button will allow you to create a new, free wiki (that you might use in your classroom, for example.)

Clicking on “My Wikis” is a way to see every wiki you are a part of; clicking on the name of the wiki will take you to the respective Home Page.

Clicking on the image of the envelope (you can accomplish the same thing in the “Dashboard” by clicking on the box that says “Mail”) will take you to your inbox. For privacy reasons, there are no individual email addresses shown on the wiki (even though you used one to register, no one can see them). Instead, each person has a wiki email account; you can send a message to anyone who is a member of the wiki, but those messages can only be responded to here.

Clicking on “My Account” (you can accomplish the same thing in the “Dashboard” by clicking on the box that says “Settings”) will take you to where you can change or update your personal email address, password, image (mine is the TAH logo, but you can upload any image you want – although Robert E. Lee is already taken!), and other personal settings. Just make sure, once again, to click on the save button at the bottom of the page or your changes will not take effect.

Clicking the “Help” button will take you to Wikispaces long, and detailed, help materials; “Sign out” will sign you out (which I recommend doing anytime you are not using a personal home computer); and, for some reason, the Wikispaces image will take you to the “Dashboard” again.

### *2. Page Layouts and Organization*

Look at the home page again. This is supposed to be a desk, with a notebook sitting on top of it. Above the notebook, to the left, is the TAH logo. If you click on it from any page in the wiki (but not the Dashboard) you will be taken back to this Home Page. There is also something that looks like a strip of paper to the right of the notebook; this is a list of every page connected to Enduring Visions. In addition to the Home Page, I have created a separate page for each mini-institute. Normally, these have the Era number first, then session number, then some form of the title of the institute. So, the second Era One section is the page “1\_2 The Worlds of Christopher Columbus.” Clicking on any title will take you to the page devoted to that institute. There are two other pages as well: “Blog Entries” and “Calendar.” The “Calendar” will list dates of importance for the upcoming TAH Year Two, while the “Blog Entries” is a page with links to my recent blogs on the TAH main website ([www.teachamericanhistory.org](http://www.teachamericanhistory.org)) as well as some links to other sites of a technical nature that may be useful.

The notebook area is the main section of the wiki where information can be shared and posted. Along the top of the notebook there is the name of the current page, and then five buttons: “Page,” “Discussion,” “History,” “Notify Me,” and over on the right “Edit” (please

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note: if you are not logged in, you will not see the word “Edit.” Instead, you will see “Protected.” In order to post or add files to the wiki, you must log in). “Page” is the basic screen where you can post information. Clicking on “Discussion,” though, is a way to ask a question of your fellow teachers (or answer someone else’s question). If there are previously posted discussion “threads,” simply click on the name to see all of the messages related to that thread. To start a new discussion, click on “New Post,” type the subject, and then ask away. To receive a specific email to notify you when someone responds to your message, click the “Monitor this topic” box. The “History” button will show you all the changes that have ever been made to that specific page (which is why nothing can be lost if you accidentally make a change!). The “Notify Me” button allows you to be notified via email about any changes to that specific page. (Note: if you have already chosen to be notified of all changes to the entire wiki, it is not necessary to make any other additions through the “Notify Me” buttons. Use these if you only wish to be notified about specific pages or discussion topics.)

## *3. Editing Basics*

Now we come to the meat of the wiki: the chance to collaborate and contribute! If you have logged in, click on the Edit button from one of the pages. (I am looking at the page for “1\_1 Pre Columbian America” as I work through this guide.) The screen changes, and you will be looking at a simplified version of the text on the notebook. Every mini-institute has a similar kind of opening message; it is after this that new material may be added. On the “1\_1” page, in addition to text, you will see a box that says “Other Widget;” I will speak more about widgets later. If you have text to add, simply go to the bottom of the page with your cursor, hit enter a couple of times (to separate your material from those entries that come before it), and begin typing. It is that easy! When you are finished, make sure you click the “Save” button on the “moving menu.” (I call it a moving menu because it appears when you have clicked on the edit button, and it remains at the top of your viewing window even as you scroll down.)

There are numerous options on the “moving menu.” The first four should be familiar with anyone who is used to word processors, as they are some options to make your text more interesting. One button makes the text bold, another italic, the third underlines, and the fourth changes the font (careful: hours can be spent trying out different fonts and colors!). The fifth button on the “moving menu” is the “Comment” button, which allows you to make a side comment on a section of the text (in other words, if you do not wish to intrude in the text itself, you may highlight a section and then click the “Comment” button and add something of particular relevance to that section.). Just to try it out, I inserted a comment on part of my own text on the “5\_3” page. It can be found at the bottom of the right-hand side of the notebook. If you do not see it, that may be because you need to click on the tiny conversation balloon to the right of the text in the notebook section, near the top. There is a number inside the balloon – the number coincides with the number of comments for that page. When the conversation/comment section is active (i.e., clicked on) it creates a separate column in the notebook in which the comments can be viewed. The section of the text that is being commented on is highlighted yellow, and the comment appears to the far right of it.

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The next few buttons are probably of low importance: one (that probably says “normal”) has to do with the spacing of the text, while the next three help produce numbered outlines, bullet points, or a ruler. It is the next few buttons of the “moving menu” that will be dealt with in the following sections.

## *4. Adding Links*

One of the first things to do is load up both the Enduring Visions wiki and the website that you would like to link the wiki to. Click on the edit button on the applicable wiki page, then type a description of the site or, at least, the title of the site. Highlight the title or part of the description and then click the button on the “moving menu” that says “Link.” A new window pops up, giving you three choices. The first (“Wiki Link”) and the third (“Anchor”) can probably be ignored, since most of the time you will be posting an “External Link,” so make that choice. Now, you should see a window that says “Link text” (and the box that follows should be filled by the word or words that you previously highlighted), and a window that says “Address.” Now go to the separate window or tab in which you have the other website (the one you wish to tell others about), highlight the web address of that site, copy it, and then go back to the wiki. Paste that address into the “Address” box, and, if you have done everything correctly, the address should now be showing. When I am navigating on another site, and I click on a link, I prefer that the link opens in a new window (that way, when I am done with the link, I do not have to try to get back to where I originally was. I simply close the new window that had opened up, and the old window remains). So, I would recommend choosing the box “New Window,” then hit the button “Add Link.” If you have done everything correctly, you should now see the highlighted words of the text as a different color. Make sure you click the save button on the “moving menu,” and your link will have been officially added to the wiki.

## *5. Adding Photos, Files, and Documents*

First of all, remember where (which folder, or where on the desktop) the photo, file, or document you wish to share is stored on your computer. If it is an image from another website, first download the image or file to your computer (and you can do this by right-clicking on it and choosing the “save target as” or “save picture as” option). Then, after clicking on “Edit” on the applicable wiki page, find the button on the “moving menu” entitled “File.” When you click on “File,” a new window pops up. The “External Image” choice can be ignored if you have saved the file to your computer, so the default choice (the one that initially pops up) is “Insert Files.” You must first transfer the file from your computer to the wiki’s computer, and you do this by clicking on the “Upload Files” button. You must now find where, on your computer, the file is located. Choose the file, then click on “Open.”

The file will begin the transfer (or upload) process of being sent from your computer to the wiki’s computer. This may take a minute or two, depending on how large the file is. Word documents should only take a few seconds, but a large, highly defined photo will take much longer. When the transfer is completed, the file will appear at the top of the list and there will be some kind of image to the left of the name. (Note: a document will have a picture of a piece of

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paper, or a picture a mini-image of the picture. If you do not see an image, then the file is not completely ready. Do not click to embed the file until an image appears). Click on the name of the file, and it will automatically be placed in the text of the wiki. Click on the "Save" button on the "moving menu," and your file will now be available for all to download and use.

### *6. The Wonder of Widgets*

I was always told that "Widget" was short for "Window Gadget," but this may just be a myth. However, a Window Gadget is a useful way to think about it, as this option of the "moving menu" allows you to add to the wiki a wide variety of multimedia files or other interactive items directly onto the page.

There is a separate window that pops up when the "Widget" button is chosen from the "moving menu." When the new window appears, there is a whole new set of menu items along the left-hand side, and the first option, "Wikispaces," is already chosen. The right-hand side of the new window gives you all the different options for the Wikispaces' widgets, most of which you will probably not use for Enduring Visions (but some of which might come in handy for a classroom wiki, such as a Table of Contents, or a Discussion Area).

The second of the left-hand options is "Video." When that is chosen, new options appear in the right-hand side: YouTube, TeacherTube, Google Video, Yahoo Video, BlipTV, and other. Which option you choose is determined by where you have found the video that you wish to "embed" in the wiki. (Note: embedding a video, rather than just posting a link, is useful because it puts the video directly into the wiki rather than having the person leave the wiki to go to an outside site to view the video, and this is a useful way around filtering software that many school systems employ.) These all operate the same way (and the wiki gives general instructions whichever option you choose), but I will walk you through how to embed a YouTube video onto the wiki.

While logged into the wiki, open up YouTube in a separate window or tab and find the video that you wish to share. Underneath the YouTube video are several buttons: "Like," "Dislike," "Add," "Share" and "Flag." Click on "Share." There is the direct link for that video, if you wish to copy and paste the link onto the wiki. But, if you are hoping to embed the video, click on the button that says "Embed." There is now a new section, with a much longer series of codes. This is the code to embed the video. (Note: there is additional option here that may be helpful to note. Normally, at the end of a YouTube video, they suggest "related videos." I have often found that some of them are inappropriate, especially for a school setting. Under the embed code are some other options in clickable boxes, one of which is "Show suggested videos when video is finished." The box is automatically checked, but if you uncheck it first, the embed code is changed slightly, and there will be no suggested videos then on the wiki when you have completed your embedding.) Copy the embed code, and then return to the wiki. When you choose YouTube from the Video section of the Widget menu, it gives you an empty box. Paste the embed code there, then click save. The widget menu will now disappear, and a large box will appear on the wiki page. You are still in edit mode, so the video will not yet appear officially until you hit the save button again on the moving menu. Now, everyone can view the video!

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Besides the “Video” option, there are a host of other options (many of which may not be that useful for our wiki but might be useful for a classroom wiki). Audio files, calendars, maps, surveys, slideshows, spreadsheets, documents, etc. can all be embedded in the wiki page. Most of these options involve using another outside website, from which you will need to find the embedding code to paste into the appropriate box on the wiki – just as you did for a YouTube video.

One final note: many of these sites allow people to post their own material. So, if you did a video in your class, you could upload the video to YouTube, and then embed the video that way into the wiki. Or, you could upload a document into Scribd (a document website), and then embed the document into the wiki (this is what I did with the “Where I’m From” student poems that appear on the 1\_1 page of the wiki). But, sometimes things (particularly documents) may not appear, in embedded form, as you intend. Originally, I had some directions for one of the slave trade activities embedded on the wiki through Scribd. However, I noticed after the fact that many punctuation marks were translated as odd letters, and some of the links did not translate over either. When I could not get it fixed, I simply deleted the Scribd widget and uploaded the exercise as a basic document file that could be downloaded by those interested.

That should get you on your way! If you have any additional questions, or other issues that arise as you work more with the wiki, do not hesitate to ask. I am perfectly willing to expand this guide if the need arises!

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