

**Fundación Puertorriqueña de las Humanidades**  
***Puerto Rico Online Encyclopedia***

**Editorial Policy and Authors' Guide**

**I. Mission Statement and Description of the *Puerto Rico Online Encyclopedia***

The *Puerto Rico Online Encyclopedia (PROE)* project is directed and sponsored by the **Fundación Puertorriqueña de las Humanidades (FPH)**. Like any encyclopedia, its mission is to serve as a primary source of information on a variety of subjects; in this case, Puerto Rico. The multi-media format of this resource provides users with a practical and dynamic means of accessing the information they seek in the *Encyclopedia's* electronic pages. It is a compendium of existing knowledge regarding the Puerto Rican cultural experience and its historical background, physical environment, and social milieu. The contents of this project will therefore be subject to constant revision and updates in order to maintain a lively and timely focus on the ever-changing cultural panorama of Puerto Rico.

**II. Target Audience**

The *Encyclopedia* is intended to be a basic reference source, and as such it is designed for a wide general readership. In particular, it is targeted for high school students, for whom the *Encyclopedia* could become an indispensable study tool. For their teachers, it will be an effective teaching tool. On the other hand, cyberspace has no borders; therefore, the language and information must be adaptable to a heterogeneous audience. The most important style consideration for general articles is the use of clear, simple, accessible language. Anyone interested in learning about the culture and history of the Puerto Rican people will find in the *Encyclopedia* a fast, accurate and rigorous option. The *PROE* may be accessed in Spanish and in English.

**III. Structure and Writers' Guidelines for the *Overview Essays***

**A. Structure**

The *Puerto Rico Online Encyclopedia (PROE)* has been organized into 16 main thematic sections. Each section begins with an Overview Essay to which shorter essays will be added. These Specialized Essays address specific subjects deriving from the general theme, according to the needs and nature of that section. That is, each section will have an introductory main article and specialized articles that are shorter and more specific. In addition, each section will include multimedia resources including glossaries, photo galleries, video and audio resources, and links to other websites.

## B. Overview Essay: Writers' Guidelines

The **Overview Essay** is the main written text introducing the theme of each section. It is a general presentation providing, as its name suggests, a panoramic view of the subject. For this reason, it must meet the requirements explained below. These are expository, descriptive essays presenting and analyzing the various section themes.

This essay should be written in a style that is entertaining to the reader, and that will capture the interest of a general public, particularly of young students who do not specialize in the field. It should not be a discursive text, weighed down by an excess of details, lists, technical jargon, or excessively long historical explications.

1. The Overview Essay should include a brief **Introduction** consisting of three short paragraphs. The author may then include from four to a maximum of six **subsections**, depending on the writer's own criteria and the requirements of the subject. Each subsection should be brief (four to five paragraphs) and should, in itself, be a general presentation.

If you are preparing an Overview Essay, bear in mind that this main article is to be a general introduction. Later, more specific Specialized Essays will be added, which will cover the initial information in greater depth.

2. Write short **paragraphs**, consisting of no more than seven sentences each. These sentences, in turn, should be brief and concise. **Syntax** should be clear and direct, with simple sentence structure. In general, use the active voice rather than the passive. Style should be consistent throughout the essay, so take care with such matters as verb tenses and agreement in number between subjects and verbs.

3. The **language** and **vocabulary** of the essays should be correct, properly formal, yet simple, in order to achieve the educational goals. Avoid excessive technical or specialized jargon. You may provide a brief explanation of a term when appropriate. Use **bold** type to indicate terms that link to additional information within the *Encyclopedia*, such as biographies, places, dates, titles, etc. You may also include a glossary of key terms, if needed.

4. The **total length** of an Overview Essay should be 4,000 words. The Introduction may be a maximum of about 500 words, and each subsection may be 800 to 1000 words. You are allowed to juggle the available space based on these criteria.

5. **Introduction:** The initial paragraphs of the Overview Essay should present the topic clearly and directly. You may choose to present a bird's-eye view of the topic's main characteristics, factors that have influenced its development, a description of current conditions or trends in the field, etc. For the readers' sake, it is important to contextualize the subject in the present. Use whatever method you prefer in order to indicate, coherently and logically, how the subject will be developed in the subsections. This first part shall be titled "Introduction."

The first paragraph of the Introduction is fundamental, because it will define and explain the theme of that section. Take great care in writing the first sentence. Clarity and organization will help you in developing the subject briefly and briskly throughout the Essay.

6. **Subsections** are independent and general; they do not necessarily have to follow a narrative thread or chronological order. You may use these divisions to present styles, trends, movements, factors, or patterns that are representative of the main theme. As stated above, the Overview Essay may include four to six subsections, each with 800 to 1000 words. It should also include a **Conclusion** of approximately the same length as the subsections.

7. The Overview Essay should summarize and conceptualize the theme. Avoid tedious details and lengthy chronological narratives that the reader may find monotonous. The Essay should provide a general analysis; aim for a lively discussion, emphasizing the most important and distinctive elements of the subject. Refrain from expressing subjective judgments and evaluations; your viewpoint should be expository, objective, basic, and scholarly.

8. Treat scientific and technological subjects from a broad, descriptive perspective. Keep the essay as unspecialized as possible; take care to avoid excessively technical writing.

9. The Overview Essays shall not include bibliographies, lists of suggested readings, footnotes, or endnotes. The FPH reserves the right to request a bibliography or reading list from you in the future; in that case, follow the style manual of your academic discipline.

10. You may suggest multimedia images and references to accompany your text. You may also suggest useful links to related websites and provide the corresponding URLs (www.xxxxx.xx-). Please verify that such pages are current and trustworthy.

11. In your essay, use language that is inclusive, nonsexist, nondiscriminatory, and free of bias-revealing clichés.

12. The FPH can provide you with model Overview Essays and Specialized Essays for reference purposes. Specialized Essays should follow the usual guidelines for good writing and comply with the evaluation criteria. The maximum length for a Specialized Essay is 2000 words; the essay may include short subsections if the author so desires.

### C. Evaluation Criteria

1. Criteria have been established in order to guarantee the credibility and reliability of an online encyclopedia as a source of information. In summary, the content should be **authoritative, current, accurate, and objective**. Authority refers, on the one hand, to the credentials of the authors of the articles and, on the other, to the prestige of the organization sponsoring the online publication. To be current, the information must be revised and kept up to date. The *PROE* is both authoritative and current thanks to the direction of the **Fundación Puertorriqueña de las Humanidades**, to its team, and to all who collaborate in the project. This will be the guarantee of quality sought by future users of the *Puerto Rico Online Encyclopedia*.

The credibility and reliability of the *Encyclopedia* as a source of information will depend on the level of accuracy of the text and that, in turn, depends on its authors and editors. Accuracy refers to precision and thoroughness in the preparation of the articles, and verifiability of the supporting data. Objectivity requires impartial and balanced writing. If the topic is controversial, the nature of the disagreement should be explained, and points of divergence should be presented objectively.

2. The FPH will evaluate all essays, taking into account the way in which they respond to the following questions: Do they contribute to a better understanding of the Puerto Rican experience? Is the entire article on topic, and does it maintain internal coherence? Is the information up to date?

3. Essays will be written by specialists, scholars, researchers, and scientists from a variety of spaces within the world of knowledge: humanistic, aesthetic, scientific, historical, linguistic, ethnological, etc.

#### **IV. Requirements for Submission of Essays**

Essays will undergo a process of selection and editing. As part of the process, you will be asked to sign a document entitled “*Acuerdo*” (Agreement) for paid articles or “*Permiso para reproducción y distribución*” (Permission for Reproduction and Distribution) for unpaid articles. The text will undergo a process of editorial review during which you should be available for consultation and revisions. This process may be repeated during the translation stage.

1. Format: Write your essay using Microsoft Word for Windows and submit it via email to epr@prtc.net. Keep a copy of the original in your files.

2. Due Dates: Submit your essay by the previously established deadline (according to the “*Acuerdo*” or “*Permiso*” that you signed). Notify PREH as soon as possible in case of any problems in complying with the agreement.

3. Word Counts: Concise writing is characteristic of texts for encyclopedias. You must pay careful attention to the maximum word counts established in the *Authors’ Guide* or arranged by special agreement with the editors.

4. Biographical Note: Along with your article, please submit a brief biographical note including your academic background, your specialty, and credentials that establish your competence as an authority on the subject. In addition, please provide contact information (address, telephone numbers, email address).

5. Overview Essays are to be works that have not previously been published.

6. Specialized Essays within each section may be unpublished works or adaptations of previously published articles, in accordance with the agreements between the authors and the Editorial Board of the FPH.

7. The **Fundación Puertorriqueña de las Humanidades** and the *Puerto Rico Online Encyclopedia* will hold the copyright to material to be published electronically in the *Encyclopedia*, by mutual agreement among the parties.

8. The **Fundación Puertorriqueña de las Humanidades** and the *Puerto Rico Online Encyclopedia* reserve all rights of publication.