

## What is a scholarly journal?

A scholarly journal may be referred to as a professional journal, a referred publication or a peer-reviewed journal—all of these terms mean basically the same thing. A scholarly journal differs from a popular magazine in several ways. Although there is no absolute definition, the characteristics listed below will help you distinguish between a magazine and a scholarly journal. A journal cannot always be identified by just one or two of these characteristics; on the other hand, not all of the characteristics must be present to make a publication a scholarly journal. Look for a majority of the characteristics listed.

**If you need help, ask a reference librarian.**

### Scholarly Journals vs. Magazines

	MAGAZINES	JOURNALS
<b>Author</b>	Journalist or layperson; sometimes author unknown; may be a scholar but not in the field covered	Expert (scholar, professor, researcher) in the field covered; author's credentials are indicated (degrees, position, etc.)
<b>Abstracts</b>	No abstracts (article summaries) included	Most contain an article summary or abstract on the first page of the article
<b>Notes</b>	Few or no references or footnotes	Include footnotes and/or a bibliography
<b>Style</b>	Written in a journalistic style suitable for the average reader	Written for experts in the field, describe/discuss research
<b>Editing</b>	Articles reviewed/edited by one or more editors on the magazine staff	Articles reviewed by an editorial board of outside scholars before publishing; more scholarly review (Articles are often referred to as peer reviewed)
<b>Length</b>	Articles are shorter and provide overviews of topics covered	Articles are longer and usually provide detailed analysis of a topic
<b>Audience</b>	General public	Scholars, experts in the field
<b>Advertisements</b>	Many, often in color	Few, if any. Those included are usually for books, scholarly items
<b>Frequency</b>	Usually weekly or monthly	Usually monthly or quarterly
<b>Contents</b>	Current events and general interest or news articles	Specialized research topics
<b>Indexes</b>	Articles listed in general periodical indexes such as <i>Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature</i>	Articles listed in subject-specific periodical indexes or abstracts such as <i>MLA International Bibliography</i> and <i>Social Work Abstracts</i>
<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>People Weekly</i></li> <li>• <i>Sports Illustrated</i></li> <li>• <i>Newsweek</i></li> <li>• <i>Time</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Criminology</i></li> <li>• <i>Journal of the American Medical Association</i></li> <li>• <i>Modern Philology</i></li> <li>• <i>Journal of Historical Geography</i></li> </ul>

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is a scholarly/adjudicated/refereed/peer-reviewed journal?

Scholarly journals may be referred to as professional, adjudicated, refereed, or peer-reviewed journals. They are written for experts in a particular field and are generally published by professional organizations such as the American Medical Association or the American Historical Society. An article submitted to one of these journals will typically go through a review process whereby others in the profession decide if the article is worthy of publication in the journal.

## How do I look for an article on my topic in a scholarly journal?

To find an article from a scholarly journal on your subject, first choose an appropriate database or index. (See the Collier Library's website for a complete list of databases). Some databases – such as MLA International Bibliography – will not index any popular magazines. A citation or reference for a journal article in databases like this will almost certainly be for an article in a scholarly journal. To determine what is indexed in an individual database, look for *Help* or *About* links within the database or ask a librarian for assistance.

Other databases – such as Academic Search Premier and General OneFile – will include citations to popular magazines and newspapers, as well as scholarly journals. Both of these databases will allow you to limit your search to scholarly or peer reviewed sources.

## How can I limit my search to scholarly articles?

In Academic Search Premier you can click the box marked **Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals** under the Refine Search tab.

In General OneFile click the box label **“to peer-reviewed publications”** under **Limit the results**.

Other databases have similar ways you may limit your results to scholarly articles. If you have questions ask a librarian or call the Reference Desk at 765-4469.

## Why is it important to use articles from scholarly journals as sources for my research paper?

The most important reason is that instructors require that at least some of your sources come from peer reviewed journals. Articles are written at different levels and for different audiences. It is essential that you choose the type of periodical that contains the best information on your research topic. Your instructor wants you to be familiar with all types of periodicals and be able to incorporate them into your research.

## Does this mean that magazines should never be used for research?

Magazines can be good sources of information if you remember what you are getting. Remember, magazine articles are written for general audiences and do not contain in-depth research. You need to recognize the differences between magazines and journals so you will know when it is appropriate to use a magazine and when it is appropriate to use a journal.

## Summing Up.....

<u>Magazines</u>	<u>Journals</u>
✓ General Audience	✓ Specialized Audience
✓ Popular Culture	✓ Scholarly Nature
✓ Written to entertain or persuade	✓ Report original research, discoveries, reviews, etc...
✓ Lots of Advertisements	✓ No Advertisements
✓ Colorful pictures	✓ Few, if any, pictures
✓ No works cited	✓ Footnotes/endnotes
✓ Articles written by professional journalists	✓ Articles written by professionals in a specific field