

Scholarly (Peer-Reviewed / Refereed) Journals

Distinguishing Between Scholarly Journals & Popular Periodicals

College research assignments frequently require students to use “peer-reviewed / refereed” journals. Here are some guidelines to help you distinguish between two major kinds of periodicals found in academic libraries:

Scholarly (Peer-Reviewed / Refereed)

Popular

	Scholarly (Peer-Reviewed / Refereed)	Popular
Content	More specialized, research based - often communicate research findings in a given field.	General interest, often reports opinion in a story format; focus on current events and topics of general interest, and include a variety of advertisements for consumer products.
Author	Experts, scholars, and noted professionals. Authors are most often clearly affiliated with an academic or research institution and an address is provided for readers to contact the author at his or her institution or academic department.	Journalists, students, or anonymous, etc. Credentials not usually provided.
Audience	Articles targeted to experts, specialists, or scholars in the same field.	General interest readers.
Bibliography	References/bibliographies are always included.	Articles rarely include references.
Language	Higher level language with a more formal tone. Language used may be specific to a discipline.	Broad and simple language, written to be understood by almost anyone.
Length of article	Longer articles, providing in-depth analysis.	Shorter articles, providing broader overviews of topics.
Layout	Articles usually more structured, may include: abstract, literature review, methodology, results, conclusion, bibliography.	Articles do not necessarily follow a specific format or structure
Peer review policy	Articles are reviewed for quality and accuracy before publication by peer or experts in the field. Editorial board is composed of scholars in the field.	Editor or editorial board are members of the magazine's staff – not experts in the field.
Special features	Illustrations that support the text, such as tables of statistics, graphs, maps, or photographs.	Illustrations with glossy or color photographs, usually for advertising purposes.
Examples	 	

