

Distinguishing Scholarly Journals from Other Periodicals

Critically evaluating resources is an important piece of the research process. In order to effectively evaluate articles it is useful to distinguish scholarly journals from non-scholarly journals. Journals can fall into one of four categories: scholarly, general interest, popular or sensational. Use the chart below to assist in distinguishing between scholarly journals and popular magazines. Also, read a review of the magazine or journal by looking up the title in the Reference book called, Magazines for Libraries.

Scholarly Journals	Popular Magazines
Have a serious look. Contains graphs and charts but few photos.	Have a slick look. Include illustrations, drawings or color photos.
Always cite their sources with footnotes or bibliography.	Sometimes sources are cited, but usually not.
Written by a scholar or researcher in the field.	Generally written by member of the magazines staff or a free lance write. Articles may also be unsigned.
Written for an audience with background in the field.	Covers general interests and appeals to a broad audience. Main purpose is to entertain.
Much of the research done is original.	Information is second or third hand.
Includes few advertisements.	Includes many advertisements.
Many of these journals are published by professional organizations, scholarly presses or universities. Many are peer reviewed . (<i>The "Advanced Search" option in the Ebsco database allows you to limit to articles published in only peer reviewed journals</i>).	Published by commercial presses.
EXAMPLES: <i>Journal of Marriage and Family</i> <i>American Economic Review</i>	EXAMPLES: <i>Time</i> <i>Sports Illustrated</i>

Adapted from:

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