



Scholarly Journals v. Popular Magazines

This handout, based on *Scholarly Journal V. Popular Magazine Articles* and created by Celita DeArmond, Reference/Instruction Librarian at the University of Texas San Antonio Library, is used with permission.

How to tell the difference...



Scholarly



Popular

Authorship	Authors are usually experts or specialists in subject field, name and credentials always provided.	Author is usually a staff writer or a journalist, name and credentials often not provided.
Editors	Articles are usually reviewed and critically evaluated by a board of experts in the field, a.k.a. peer-reviewed or refereed.	Articles are evaluated by editors on staff, not by experts in the field.
Bibliography	A bibliography, works cited, reference list and/or footnotes almost always accompany articles to document research.	A bibliography, works cited or reference list is usually not provided, although names of reports or references may be mentioned in the text. May also provide a "For More Information" reading list.
Language/Audience	Written in the jargon of the subject field for scholarly audience (professors, researchers, or students).	Written in non-technical language for anyone to understand.
Illustration	Small number of illustrations supporting the text, such as tables of statistics, graphs, maps, or photographs.	Many illustrations with glossy or color photographs, especially in the advertising.
Length	Longer articles, providing in-depth analysis of topics, frequently very specific.	Shorter articles, providing broader overviews of topics.
Format/Structure	Articles often structured, may include these sections: abstract, literature review, methodology, results, conclusion, bibliography.	Articles may not necessarily follow a rigidly-defined format or structure.
Appearance	More likely to have table of contents on cover. May lack color, glossy paper, interesting layout.	Usually filled with color and pictures with a stronger emphasis on captivating graphic design.

NOTE: Not every article published in a scholarly journal has been through a peer-review process! Short items like editorials, news tidbits, letters to the editor, and book reviews are often included in scholarly journals, but are not themselves 'scholarly' articles.

Questions? Ask at the Reference Desk for further information.