

Scholarly Journals & Articles

A scholarly journal is also known as an **academic journal**, a **peer-reviewed journal**, or a **refereed journal**.

Peer-reviewed: subjected to a rigorous evaluation through a peer-review process.

- The process involves an editorial board who requests subject experts to review and evaluate submitted articles before accepting them for publication.
- Submissions are evaluated using very specific criteria.
- This process is used to maintain the quality and integrity of the material that the journal publishes.
- Members of the editorial board are listed at the beginning of the journal issue. (Niseteo, "What is a Scholarly Journal?", www.lib.sfu.ca)

The following is an overview of scholarly journal articles, as explained by Leslie F. Stebbins in *Student Guide to Research in the Digital Age*:

The purpose, author expertise, writing style, appearance, length, and vocabulary differ greatly between scholarly journals and other periodicals such as magazines and newspapers...

Scholarly journal articles are the essential resource for reporting the findings of **academic research**. Professors or other experts **specializing in a particular discipline** or area of study write journal articles. For any substantive research paper, it is essential to include information from at least some journal articles.

Journal articles provide more recent research findings than books because books take longer to write and publish. Journal articles also provide a **more focused analysis of a specific topic...**

In addition, scholarly articles typically contain extensive bibliographies (lists of citations) on which the research is based. The articles are written for a limited audience of other scholars and students in the field. Journals have minimal advertising and pictures, other than graphs and tables. They tend to be more plain-looking than magazines, whether online or in print. The writing style can be more technical and complex than that found in popular magazines. Journals are frequently written in a formal style that reflects the language and methodology of the discipline. (42-43)

Common elements found in a scholarly journal article:

- Title
- Abstract (summary of article contents)
- Background
- Research methodology/procedure
- Results and discussion
- Graphs or charts
- Footnotes or endnotes
- References or bibliographies

A COMPARISON

Criteria/Element	Scholarly Journals	Trade Publications	Popular Magazines
Purpose	Facilitate scholarly communication between members of a particular academic discipline and/or the public	Provide information to members of a particular industry or profession	Provide general information and entertainment to the public
Publishers	Academic organizations	Professional and/or trade organizations	Commercial/private publishers
Authors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written by academics or experts in the field • Includes author credentials • Affiliations of authors are listed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry experts, professionals, or practitioners • May be written by the editorial staff or a freelance writer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be written by the editorial staff or a freelance writer • Usually paid for the article • May or may not have subject expertise
Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarly researcher • Faculty • Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals in the field • Interested people who are non-specialists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public • Interested people who are non-specialists
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article contains an abstract • Reports on original research & reviews while expanding on current theories • Critiques previously published materials • Some articles may be primary sources • Information is specific to a certain academic discipline or field and usually requires professional or academic knowledge to be fully understood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusively professional, industry, or trade information • Reports on current news, trends, or products of a certain industry • Practical information for professionals working in the field/industry • Articles can be fact, anecdote, and/or opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically a secondary source; a discussion on someone else's research • May include personal narrative or opinion • Covers news, current events, hobbies, & other interests • No special knowledge or vocabulary required to understand
Accountability	Peer-reviewed (see definition)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluated by editorial staff who may/may not be experts in the field • Very rarely peer-reviewed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluated by editorial staff – not experts in the field • Edited for format & style • Not peer-reviewed
Graphics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very few illustrations • Mostly graphs, charts, or maps that support the text • Few or no advertisements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photographs, graphics, and charts • Trade/industry related advertisements targeted to professionals in the field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractive in appearance – in color, with many graphics/images • Many advertisements and photographs

Criteria/Element	Scholarly Journals	Trade Publications	Popular Magazines
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized terminology or jargon of the field • Assumes that the reader is familiar with the subject 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized terminology or jargon of the field but not as technical • Geared to any educated audience with an interest in the field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short articles, written in a simpler language • Vocabulary is general and understandable to most readers • Does not assume familiarity with any subject
Layout & Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very structured • Includes abstract, goals/objectives, methodology, results/evidence, discussion, conclusion, bibliography • Page numbers are consecutive; for example, Issue 1 will end on page 455, so Issue 2 will begin on page 456 • Always has citations, footnotes/endnotes, and/or bibliographies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal • Organized like a newsletter or journal • Typically printed in glossy paper • Very rarely has citations, footnotes/endnotes, and/or bibliographies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very informal • May include non-standard formatting • Typically printed in glossy paper • May not present supporting evidence or conclusion • Usually NO citations, footnotes/endnotes, and/or bibliographies
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quotes and facts are verifiable • Sources are always cited in footnotes or bibliographies • Bibliographies are lengthy and cite other scholarly writings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occasionally includes brief bibliographies • Not required to report any research results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sources are sometimes cited but do not usually include footnotes or bibliography • Information is often second or third hand; original source is rarely mentioned
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Journal of Biomechanics</i> • <i>The Linguistic Review</i> • <i>Journal of Abnormal Psychology</i> • <i>History of Education Quarterly</i> • <i>Northwest Journal of Linguistics</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Canadian Banker</i> • <i>Sight and Sound</i> • <i>Architectural Record</i> • <i>PC World</i> • <i>School Library Journal</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>National Geographic</i> • <i>Psychology Today</i> • <i>Scientific American</i> • <i>Sports Illustrated</i>

The above chart was adapted and modified from Indiana University Bloomington's Libraries page, "Scholarly, Popular, and Trade Publications" (www.libraries.iub.edu) as well as Simon Fraser University Library's page, "What is a Scholarly Journal?" (www.lib.sfu.ca)

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