

# Scholarly vs. Popular Periodicals

At times, an instructor may require you to use articles from “scholarly journals” for a research project. How do you know if the article you’re looking at is scholarly? Here are a few characteristics of scholarly articles and a few characteristics of popular articles to help you differentiate between the two.

## Characteristics of a **scholarly journal** article:

- **Credibility.** Authors of scholarly journals *always* cite their sources. Usually, this list of references is lengthy and is located at the end of the document.
- **Validity.** Scholarly articles are checked for accuracy and reliability by experts in the appropriate field of study.
- **Authority.** Scholarly articles are usually written by the person/people who did the original research. Also, the authors' credentials are often listed on the article (usually their university or organization affiliation).
- **Language.** Scholarly articles are written with field-related jargon.

Here are a few examples of scholarly journals: *Journal of General Psychology*, *American Journal of Nursing*, *Clinical Rehabilitation*, *Nursing Ethics*, *American Economic Review*, and *Preventing School Failure*

## Characteristics of a **popular magazine** article:

- **Credibility.** Authors of popular articles usually do not cite references.
- **Validity.** Popular articles are not reviewed by experts. Instead, they are reviewed by editorial staff.
- **Authority.** Popular articles are written by a reporter or staff writer, whose credentials usually are not listed
- **Language.** Popular articles are written in non-technical terms for a general audience.

Here are a few examples of popular magazines: *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Outdoor Life*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Car and Driver*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *Christian Century*, *Ebony*, *People*, *Reader’s Digest*

**Research Tip:** When you are searching library databases like EBSCOhost, ProQuest, and InfoTrac for scholarly articles, be sure to **check the box on the search page that would limit the search to “scholarly peer-reviewed journals.”** Limiting your search in this way should help you locate scholarly journals quickly.