





# Scholarly vs. Popular Articles

In general, **scholarly** articles are viewed as having more **authority**. Articles from the popular press are viewed as having **less credibility**. This is why faculty often request students find "scholarly or academic journal", not "popular magazine" articles for their research sources.

When you select articles for research and when you view full text articles online you need to make a distinction between scholarly and popular material. Most periodical-article databases allow users to limit searches to "peer reviewed" publications. Use the table below to help you identify whether an article is from the scholarly or popular press.

	<b>Scholarly Publication:</b> Journals, print and online	<b>Popular Publication:</b> Magazines and newspapers, print and online
<b>Examples</b>		
<b>Author</b>	Is a noted professional or expert	Is a journalist, student, popular author; or may not be listed
<b>Advertising</b>	Very little or highly specialized	Significant amount
<b>Audience</b>	Advanced reading level; may have specialized vocabulary	Basic reading level for a general audience
<b>Bibliography, Sources or List of Works Cited</b>	A list of references is included at the end of each article	Articles rarely include references, bibliographies or lists of works cited

<b>Scholarly vs. Popular Continued</b>	<b>Scholarly Publication:</b>	<b>Popular Publication:</b>
<b>Indexing</b>	Articles are listed in specialized databases and indexes; for example <b>PsycINFO, Biosis</b> or <b>Humanities Index</b>	Articles are listed in general databases and indexes; for example <b>Reader's Guide, Sirs</b> or <b>Periodicals Index</b>
<b>Level of Language</b>	higher level language, topics are more narrowly focused, serious tone, words used are specific to a discipline, written by experts	broad and simple language, general topics, written to be understood by almost anyone
<b>Purpose</b>	Discusses a specific scholarly field	Current events, general interest items
<b>Review Policy</b>	Articles are reviewed by peers; experts in the field. Editorial board is composed of scholars in the field	Editor or editorial board are members of the magazine's staff
<b>More Examples</b>	 <p><i>African American Review, College English, JAMA, Journal of Personality, Public Opinion Quarterly, Signs, Vital Speeches</i></p>	 <p><i>Architectural Digest, Consumer Reports, Essence, Inc., People, Selecciones, Sports Illustrated, Wired</i></p>

Adapted by permission Weber State University--Stewart Library, "Scholarly vs. Popular Articles" (<http://library.weber.edu/ref/guides/howto/scholarlyarticles.cfm>)