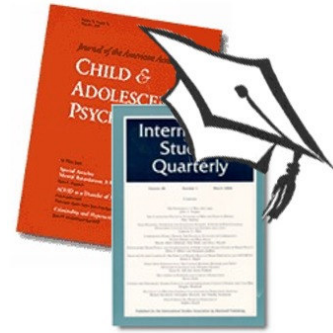


Popular vs. Scholarly Journals

What are scholarly journals? Scholarly journals, which may also be *peer-reviewed* or *refereed* journals, are academic journals that contain material that is intended for scholars or researchers in the author's field or specialty. Publishers of peer-reviewed or refereed journals follow a process where experts in the field evaluate submitted articles before they are accepted to be published. This ensures that the content is as valid and reliable as possible.



How do I know if a journal is scholarly? Scholarly journals can often be identified by searching our library research databases. Many of those databases, like EBSCOHost and ProQuest, allow you to **limit your search results** to only those journals that are peer-reviewed or scholarly. Some databases, like JSTOR and Elsevier ScienceDirect, include only scholarly material. The database called Ulrich's Periodical Directory (accessible via a link upon your initial journal search AND from the library's "complete list" of databases) describes most aspects of almost all journals.

Another trick is to look at the **publisher's web site** or within the **journal itself**. Some journals will identify themselves as peer-reviewed. You may also want to look at the editorial statements or instructions to contributors: within these areas you can often learn if a journal uses a peer-review process.

How do I tell scholarly and popular materials apart?

Popular periodicals are generally magazines, and tend to have the following attributes:

- Contain short articles (1-2 pages)
- Authors are unnamed, anonymous, or are staff writers
- Lack specific references, citations or footnotes
- Appeal to a broad audience
- Contain numerous advertisements
- Use simple language geared to the general public
- Feature colorful and/or glossy photographs or drawings



Scholarly materials are journals, which are of a more academic nature and usually:

- Contain long articles (5+ pages)
- Are written by named scholars or authorities in their fields
- Have citations or footnotes
- Contain jargon (language that pertains to the field or discipline)
- Often include graphs or charts
- Report on original scholarly research
- Are written to relay information to other scholars in the field
- Can be (but are not always) peer-reviewed or refereed

