



Differences Between Scholarly Journals and Popular Magazines

A helpful video: <http://youtu.be/VeyR30Yq1tA>

	Scholarly	Popular
Appearance	Charts, Formulas, Graphs Serious appearance	Many graphics, Photos Full-page advertisements Bright, attractive covers
Advertising	Very little or highly specialized	Large amount
Audience	Specific (e.g., scholars, researchers, professionals, students)	General public.
Availability	By subscription only. Paper and/or online	Sold at newsstands, supermarkets, and the Internet
Author	Expert/specialist in field. Credentials usually given.	Not always identified. May be a staff writer or free-lancer.
Content	In-depth coverage of original research findings on narrowly-defined topics.	Broad coverage of a variety of current-interest topics.
Credits/Sources	Usually includes a bibliography and/or footnotes.	Few references may be included in the text.
Editors	Peer-reviewed by other experts in the field.	Reviewed by editors on staff.
Frequency of publication	Less frequently such as monthly or quarterly.	More frequently such as daily or weekly.
Language	Includes jargon of the field (specialized vocabulary).	Non-technical and conversational for any reader.
Readability	Advanced reading level	Basic reading level for a general audience
Length	Longer (usually >5 pages)	Shorter (usually <5 pages).
Publisher	Scholarly or professional organization, university press	Commercial, for profit
Purpose	To add to a body of knowledge and inform the scholarly community.	To inform the public, entertain, sell a product, or promote a viewpoint.
Examples at the MxCC Library	<p>College Mathematics Journal Journal of Developmental Education National Review</p> 	<p>Business Week, Health Popular Science, Wired</p> 

Tip: Many databases allow you to narrow or limit your search to ‘peer-reviewed or ‘refereed journals’, which will retrieve only scholarly journals matching your search terms.

Some points to remember:

- Both magazine and journal articles can be good sources for your work.
- When selecting articles, think about how you intend to use the information:
 - Do you want background on a topic new to you? (use magazines)
 - Did your teacher say to cite scholarly resources? (use journals)
- Sometimes a combination of the two will be appropriate for undergraduate research.
- When in doubt, check with your professor.

Finally, whatever sources you use, evaluate them carefully.

- Does the author show bias and does it affect his/her conclusions?
- Is the information accurate?
- Does the author support his/her arguments with credible evidence?