



## SCHOLARLY vs. POPULAR

Your professor has told you your research paper has to have a number of scholarly references, but you don't know exactly what that means nor do you know how to determine what is scholarly. The chart below lists some of the differences between the two. Remember, some publications might not meet all of the criteria. If you are still unsure, ask the librarian at the reference desk or visit [Ask A Librarian](#).

Scholarly publications may also be called peer reviewed or refereed. It means the article must be reviewed by other members in the field before it can be published. Scholarly articles may go through additional revisions and reviews before finally being published.

	Scholarly Periodicals (Journals)	Popular Periodicals (Magazines)
Length	Lengthy articles (5+ pages)	Short (1-5 pages)
Audience	Professors, researchers, non-academic professionals in the discipline, students	General, non-academic, non-professional
Purpose	Inform, report, or make original research available to the scholarly community	Provide general information, entertain or persuade
Authors	Scholars or researchers in the discipline	Journalists, staff writers; not necessarily an expert
Style and language	Formal; uses the language of the discipline; assumes knowledge of that language	Informal; uses language for a general audience
Bibliography	Cited material in footnotes/endnotes with an accompanying bibliography; able to consult material used in the article	None; may occasionally have a footnote but not a full bibliographic citation
Advertising	Minimal; usually relates to the discipline	Extensive advertising not associated with the content
Illustrations/Graphics	Minimal use of images unless needed to support the research	Many images and photographs used
Publisher	Professional organization (American Medical Association), university (U of Chicago Press) or other scholarly publisher (Elsevier)	For profit commercial publisher
Subject coverage	Generally confined to a single field of study (Shakespeare studies, epidemiology, Middle Eastern studies)	Variety of topics in any issue; single subject area for informing or entertaining a general audience (e.g. <i>Sports Illustrated</i> , <i>Home &amp; Garden</i> )
Availability	Purchased by libraries and professionals in the discipline; usually not available for purchase at news stands	Purchased at news stands or retail shops

Examples	<i>Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), Pacific Rim Law and Policy Journal, Shakespeare Quarterly</i>	<i>Time, The New Yorker, Esquire, PC World, Psychology Today</i>