

Scholarly Journals vs. Magazines

Scholarly Journals

- Generally have a plain appearance or a serious look to them.
- May contain charts and graphs, but few glossy pages or pictures.
- Often contain lengthy, substantive articles.
- Cite their sources in the form of footnotes or bibliographies.
- Written in the academic language of the discipline covered, and assumes the reader has some scholarly background.
- Articles written by scholars or experts to report their research results to the rest of the scholarly community.
- Examples of scholarly journals include: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Political Science Quarterly*, *Journal of the American Medical Association* and *Poetry Review*.

Refereed and **peer reviewed journals** are considered to be very reputable and scholarly.

- **Refereed journals** contain articles that are evaluated by at least one subject expert in addition to the editor before being accepted for publication.
- **Peer reviewed journals** may solicit the impartial opinions of several members from the research and academic community before accepting an article for publication.

News/General Interest Magazines

- Generally appealing appearance with good use of illustrations and photographs.
- Sometimes cite their sources, but more often don't.
- Articles are written by an editorial staff member, journalist, scholar or freelance writer.
- Writing style may assume the reader has a certain educational level, but no special knowledge or background is generally required.
- Main purpose is to provide news and information for a broad audience.
- Examples include: *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Economist*, and *Psychology Today*.

Popular Magazines

- Often glossy and appealing appearance with many photographs and other graphics.
- Rarely, if ever, cite their sources.
- Short articles are written in less sophisticated language by staff members or freelance authors who may or may not be listed.
- Designed to provide entertainment, give practical information or sell an advertiser's products.
- Examples of popular magazines include: *Entertainment Weekly*, *People* and *Vogue*.

A Note about periodical articles online:

Articles in the electronic environment lack such physical elements as glossy pages, making it more challenging to distinguish periodical types. To further complicate matters, photographs, charts and illustrations that appear in the print version may be reformatted or entirely left out of an electronic full-text article.

Though it's more difficult to evaluate periodical types online, you can use some of the same information above to help you make an educated guess. Ask yourself the following questions about the full-text article:

- Is it brief and to the point, or is it lengthy and more substantive?
- Does it list the author?
- Is it written in sophisticated, academic language, or is the writing style more informal?
- Does the article cite its sources in a bibliography or footnotes?