



LIBRARY

Scholarly vs. Popular Periodicals: How to Tell the Difference

College research assignments sometimes require students to use “scholarly” periodicals. Here are some guidelines to help you distinguish between the two major kinds of periodicals found in college libraries.

	Scholarly	Popular
Authors	Scholars, researchers Credentials and affiliations are given	Journalists, staff writers Credentials are rarely given
Content	Original research, the results of a study, or a review of scholarly research. Follows scholarly format: abstract, literature review, methodology, results, conclusion, bibliography	Informative, entertaining, secondary information. No specific format is followed
References	List of references or bibliography included. In-text citations, footnotes are provided	References generally are not provided
Editors	Editors are experts in the field. Their affiliations are given	Editors are staff members, journalists, not scholars
Audience	Other scholars, researchers, students	General public
Appearance	Sober, serious. May include charts, graphs, statistics	Attractive, eye-catching, with photographs and illustrations
Length	Lengthy	Shorter. Typically 1 – 5 pages
Examples	<i>American Historical Review</i> <i>American Journal of Sociology</i>	<i>Psychology Today</i> <i>Time</i>