What Is A Scholarly Journal?

Many college professors request that all or most of the periodical articles you use in writing a research paper come from scholarly journals. This is especially true for upper-division courses and is absolutely essential in graduate work.

Some indexes, e.g. *PsycInfo*, cover only scholarly journals. Most scholarly journals are peer-reviewed so that limiting an index, e.g. *Academic Search Elite, Periodical Abstracts*, to peer reviewed will limit the search to scholarly articles.

To help distinguish scholarly journals from other periodicals, some characteristics of scholarly journals are listed below.

**Characteristics of Scholarly Journals**

Scholarly journals generally have a sober, serious look. They often contain many graphs and charts but few glossy pages or advertisements.

Scholarly journals *always* cite their sources in the form of footnotes or bibliographies.

Articles are written by a scholar in the field or by someone who has done research in the field. The author's name and credentials appear at the beginning or end of the article.

The language of scholarly journals is that of the discipline covered. It assumes some background on the part of the reader.

The main purpose of a scholarly journal is to report on concepts, research or experimentation in order to make such information available to the rest of the scholarly world.

Many scholarly journals, though by no means all, are published by professional organizations.

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Examples of Scholarly Journals:


Psychological Bulletin (published by the American Medical Association).

Journal of Marriage and the Family (published by the National Council on Family Relations).

Journal of Educational Research

Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science

MLN (Modern Language Notes)

Nursing Science Quarterly

Virology

The Volta Review

Periodicals That Are Not Scholarly:

News magazines like Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report. While these publications can be of great assistance in providing an introduction to a current topic, they don't provide the same analysis as scholarly journals. Articles are not usually written by scholars in the field and are aimed at a more general audience than are articles in scholarly journals.

Opinion magazines such as New Republic, National Review, or Nation. These magazines are aimed at an educated audience, but without assuming particular scholarly background. They comment on current events and offer a particular viewpoint on world affairs, politics, and cultural matters.

Popular magazines like Sports Illustrated, Health, Redbook, People, Readers' Digest, or Ladies’ Home Journal. Generally, academic libraries do not carry as many of these titles as public libraries do. Popular magazines, while attractive and entertaining, do not report on original research or cite sources, and are not the kind of publication to cite in the bibliography of an academic paper.

Trade journals such as Beverage World, Dealer-Scope Merchandising, Automotive News, and Progressive Grocer. These magazines are industry specific, designed to update and inform the reader on current trends in an industry.

NOTE:

If you need further information about an individual title, we suggest you consult:


For further assistance, please inquire at the Reference Desk