

Scholarly Journals Vs Popular Magazines

Your instructor may require you to use only scholarly journal articles for your research. How do you tell the difference between scholarly journal articles and popular magazine articles? Here are things to look for:

| Scholarly Journals | Popular Magazines |
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| <i>Examples: American Journal of Nursing, Teaching English as a Second Language, Modern Fiction Studies</i> | <i>Examples: Time, Ebony, People, Sports Illustrated</i> |
| The articles tend to be long. Sometimes they are very long (more than 60 pages). | The articles tend to be short, sometimes less than a full page. |
| The entire issue contains few pictures and advertisements. | Usually, there are many pictures and advertisements through the entire issue. |
| The entire issue is devoted to one subject, such as Chemistry, Biology, or Shakespeare. | The magazine may be devoted to one subject (like film stars), or it may cover many subjects (but not deeply). |
| The author is usually an expert or specialist in the field. His or her name and credentials are always provided. | The author usually is a staff writer or a journalist whose name and credentials are often not provided. |
| Articles are written by and for professors and professionals in specific fields of research. The language may be filled with the “jargon” of a profession. | Articles are written in non-technical language for the “general reader,” that is, almost any curious person who can read moderately well. |
| The articles are usually structured and divided into sections such as: abstract, literature review, methodology, discussion, result, conclusion, and a list of references. | Articles do not usually follow a specific format or structure. The author seldom cites sources (references). |
| Usually, an abstract at the beginning of the article provides a short, useful summary. | Abstracts are almost never provided, but text in bold or “boxes” emphasizes ideas in the article. |
| Illustrations usually serve to support what is said in the text. These may be tables of statistics, graphs, maps or photographs. | Most magazines are illustrated. Glossy, color photographs may relate to the articles but most are advertising. |
| Articles are usually reviewed and evaluated by experts in the same field as the author. Articles are said to be “peer reviewed” or “refereed.” | Articles are usually not evaluated by experts in the field, but by editors or staff (who may or may not know the subject well). |
| A bibliography and (or) footnotes are always provided because research must be thoroughly documented. | A bibliography is usually not provided, although names of reports or references may be mentioned in the text. |
| Unless you are devoted to the subject (or getting a great grade), reading scholarly articles can be hard & is seldom entertaining. | Articles are very often written to stir your emotions rather than to encourage critical thinking though some magazines do that too. |
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