Popular vs. Scholarly Articles – Guide

What is the difference between popular and scholarly articles?

Popular Articles (Magazines)

- You could buy in a grocery store.
- Often report current events or SUMMARIZE research.
- Use language easily understood by general readers.
- Sources may be quoted, but rarely give bibliographies or full references.
- Written for general public.
- Tend to be shorter than journal articles.

Examples of Popular Magazines:

![Images of popular magazines]

Scholarly Articles (Journals)

- Are written by scholars, researchers, faculty, and academics within a chosen field.
- Use scholarly or technical language.
- Are research based – contain a methodology used to conduct the research and the results of the research.
- Are often REFEREED or PEER REVIEWED (it has gone through a process of review by a panel of experts in that specific field of study).
- Contain full citations and a list of references for sources.
- Book reviews and editorials are not considered scholarly articles, even when found in scholarly journals.

Examples of Scholarly Journals:

![Images of scholarly journals]

Some points to remember:

- Both magazines and journal articles can be good sources for your work.
- If you want background information on a topic new to you, use magazines.
- If you are required to cite scholarly sources, use journals.
- Often a combination of the two will be most appropriate for undergraduate research.
How do I locate scholarly articles?

Longview Library subscribes to actual print copies of a few selected journals. Examples are the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* and *Journal of Educational Psychology*. These are located in the East Wing of the library.

However, you have access to hundreds of scholarly journals and thousands of scholarly articles available through the **Library Databases**.

Make sure to **LIMIT your results to include ONLY scholarly journals**. Most databases that have access to scholarly journals will give you this option.

If you do not LIMIT your results, you are likely to also retrieve non-scholarly sources, such as newspaper and magazine articles.

### If a database DOES NOT HAVE A SCHOLARLY LIMITER, it could contain all scholarly material, such as JSTOR, or no scholarly material at all.

Always read the description of each database before using.

### What if the article I want is only an abstract?

Many Databases contain both abstracts AND full-text articles. An abstract is only a summary of an article. If you find an article you would really like to read or have, but only see only “Abstract” - that means there is no full-text version available in this database.

You have a few options:

1. See if any other database has access to the journal in which your article appears by using **Periodicals A-Z** (first database listed on the Library Database page). Example: Type in *National Civic Review* into Periodical A-Z and you will see that **Academic OneFile**, another database, has full-text access to this journal back to 1993.
2. Check for the article title in **Google Scholar**.
3. Print out the abstract and bring it to a **Reference Librarian**. We can try to order the full-text article, at no cost to you. (Note – ordering articles can take anywhere from 3-7 days.)