

Scholarly and Popular Articles

“Popular” periodicals: Publications intended for the general public whose main purpose is usually entertainment. Articles in these publications are generally written by paid journalists or columnists, and reviewed by an editor. *Cosmopolitan*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *GQ* are all popular periodicals – but so are *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *National Geographic*!

Scholarly periodicals (aka Peer-Reviewed, Academic, and Refereed): Publications intended for scholars and researchers whose main purpose is usually informative. Articles in these publications are generally written by scholars, professors, and researchers in a particular discipline, and reviewed by other experts in the field. These publications, often called journals, are published by an association, an institution, or a scholarly press.

When to Use Them

Popular articles are useful if you are writing about a particularly recent event, if you need some background on a topic, or if you need sources that relate the opinions of the general public. However, since the author of the article is often unknown, these articles are not generally considered authoritative and should be used only rarely in formal research papers.

Scholarly articles, on the other hand, will likely become your main resource for research while in college. Scholarly articles are how researchers and professors communicate and add to the body of knowledge in different subjects. These articles contain more in-depth information than what you find in popular articles. Also, as they were written and reviewed by experts, they are generally more trustworthy and authoritative sources. However, these sources may seem a bit daunting to students, since they are often difficult to read if you are unfamiliar with the subject.

	Popular Sources	Scholarly Sources
Article Author	Written by a journalist or a freelance writer.	Written by an expert or researcher in the field.
Review Process	Reviewed by the magazine editor.	Reviewed by a panel of experts in the field.
Authority	The author's credentials may or may not be included.	The author's credentials and institutional affiliation are included.
Language and Style	Written with a general audience in mind.	The language is more specialized and intended for a researcher in a certain field.
Content	Gives a general overview on a variety of topics that are meant to entertain. It is very rare to see a bibliography in this type of publication.	Gives an in depth analysis on a specific subject, including an abstract, literature review, methods section, results, a conclusion, and a bibliography.
Pagination	Each issue numbers pages starting from page 1.	Pagination within a volume is continuous through all issues.