

SCHOLARLY JOURNALS vs. POPULAR MAGAZINES

<i>CRITERIA</i>	<i>SCHOLARLY JOURNALS</i>	<i>POPULAR MAGAZINES</i>
AUDIENCE	Scholars, academics, professionals	General public or specific interest group
PUBLISHER	Professional associations, universities	Commercial publishing companies
PURPOSE	Share knowledge, advance scholarship	Entertain, inform, make a profit, further a cause
AUTHORS	Scholars, researchers, specialists, experts	Generalists, journalists, professional writers
CONTEXT	Discipline-specific (e.g., psychology, history, biology)	Readership-specific (e.g., runners, "foodies," liberals, conservatives)
TOPICS COVERED	Specialized topics (e.g., impact of long-horned beetle on maple trees in 1990s: a longitudinal study)	General topics (e.g., what's hot in kitchen gardens this year; put some spice in your life with peppers)
TYPE OF LANGUAGE	Formal, technical, complex, discipline-specific	Informal, appeals to reader, entertaining
LENGTH OF ARTICLES	Long	Short
CITATIONS OR REFERENCES	Citations or references at end of article	No formal citation system
NUMBER OF AUTHORS	Often multiple authors	Single or anonymous
APPEARANCE	Few illustrations; many charts & graphs; plain	Many illustrations and photographs; eye-catching
ADVERTISEMENTS	Few	Many
CONTENT	Current research, detailed examination, cutting-edge ideas	Current trends, broad overviews, background information
TYPE OF ARTICLES	Research studies, literature reviews, observation reports, theoretical essays, theory critiques, literary criticism essays, letters to the editor, editorials, creative writing	How-to articles, news articles, feature articles, argument essays, advice columns, interviews, letters to the editor, editorials, creative writing

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Questions to Ask When Selecting Articles in Research Databases

Relevant?	Does the article address your question?
Source reliable?	Is the publication credible? Does the information seem accurate?
Sufficiently up-to-date?	Do you need historical or current information?
Level of scholarship?	OK to use a popular article? Is the information substantive? Need a scholarly article instead?
Discipline appropriate?	Is your article appropriate for the academic field you are writing in?
Right type of article?	Do you need a research study instead of an editorial or a book review?
Purpose of article?	Is the goal of the article to inform, or is it to sell a product or entertain?
Intended audience?	Is the article aimed at college-level readers, a professional audience, researchers, etc.?
Qualifications of author?	Are the author's credentials relevant?
Accuracy of information?	Are sources cited? Have facts been checked?
Depth of information?	Is the information too technical to understand, or too simple and basic?
Point of view, bias clear?	If objectivity is the goal, does the author have a vested interest or bias? If advocacy or persuasion is the goal, how clearly and logically does the author support all claims?
Opinions, claims supported by evidence?	How well is the thesis supported? Is the argument informed by facts and logic?