



Scholarly Journal or Magazine?

The distinction between scholarly journals and magazines is not always clear-cut. Not all journals have all of the characteristics listed below, and some magazines have some journal-like features. The chart below lists some of the most common characteristics of both.

| Criteria | Scholarly Journals | Magazines |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Purpose | To expand the current knowledge in a discipline | To entertain and inform; to make money for the publisher |
| Authors | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written by experts in the field such as college professors, research scientists, doctors, lawyers, and graduate students.• Authors credentials generally given | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written by the magazines editorial staff, journalists and freelance writers• Author's name may not be given• Author's credentials rarely stated |
| Audience: | Scholars, professionals, and students | General public or a specific group of consumers, such as computer users, African-American women or collectors of comic books |
| Appearance | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Covers are straightforward and vary little from issue to issue• Plain, not glossy paper;• Few illustrations and most of the illustrations are black & white graphs or charts• Few advertisements. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eye-catching covers;• Glossy paper;• Lots of color pictures• Many advertisements.• Designed for visual appeal |
| Frequency | Usually quarterly or monthly | Most often weekly, biweekly, or monthly |
| Article selection | Articles are read and approved (<i>peer-reviewed</i> or <i>refereed</i>) by a panel of experts | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Articles are selected by the editorial staff of the magazine.• Articles are not peer-reviewed or evaluated by experts. |

| Criteria | Scholarly Journals | Magazines |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Article Characteristics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses specialized language (jargon) of the discipline and assumes knowledge of the field • Lengthy articles • Journal articles generally include most or all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article title • Author and his/her affiliation • Abstract • Problem / Hypothesis • Method / Procedures • Data analysis and results • Discussion, conclusions and interpretation • Limitations • Implications / Further research • Includes a list of works cited (bibliography) and/or footnotes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No abstracts • Few if any references & rarely includes an abstract • Uses general language or, for special interest publications, uses the jargon of the targeted group • Assumes little or no specialized knowledge • Short Articles • Magazine articles usually include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article title • Author--although some articles in an issue may be unsigned |
| Examples | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infants and Young Children • JAMA • Journal of Applied Psychology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ladies Home Journal • Psychology Today • Money |
| Similar Terms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarly journal • Peer-reviewed journal • Refereed journal • Academic journal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popular magazine • General interest magazine • Trade journals are written for people in a specific industry but are otherwise more like magazines than scholarly journals. |