Scholarly, Peer-Reviewed
Purpose: To report on original research or experimentation in order to make such information available to the rest of the scholarly community.

Scholarly journals generally have a sober, serious look. The articles contain mostly text, with many graphs and charts, but few photos. Scholarly journals always cite their sources in the form of footnotes or bibliographies.

Articles are written by a scholar in the field or by someone who has done research in the field.

The language of scholarly journals is that of the discipline covered. It assumes some scholarly background on the part of the reader.

Many scholarly journals (but not all) are published by a specific professional organization.

EXAMPLES:
American Anthropologist (Journal of the American Anthropology Association)
JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association
Journal of Marriage and the Family
(Published by the National Council on Family Relations)
PMLA (Modern Language Association)
Psychological Bulletin (Published by the American Psychological Association)
Science (Journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science)

Trade & Professional
Purpose: To provide information, in a general manner, to a broad audience of concerned citizens.

These periodicals may be quite attractive, even glossy, in appearance. Some may be in newspaper format. Articles often have many illustrations, usually photographs.

These periodicals sometimes cite sources but they often do not.

Articles may be written by a scholar, a well-known professional or other expert in the subject addressed in the article. Freelance writers or members of the editorial staff may also contribute articles.

The language of these publications is geared to any educated audience. A certain level of interest and intelligence, though not expertise, is assumed. Professional and trade magazines report on developments in various fields or industries.

They are generally published by commercial enterprises or individuals, although some emanate from specific professional organizations.

EXAMPLES:

Popular
Purpose: To entertain the reader, to sell the products of their advertisers, and/or promote a viewpoint.

Popular periodicals come in various formats, but they are usually glossy with colorful, flashy covers and photos intended to entice the readers and buyers at newsstands.

Popular magazines rarely cite sources. The information is often second or third-hand and the original source is sometimes obscure.

Articles are written by staff members or free-lance writers. Articles are usually very short, written in simple language and designed to meet a minimal education level. There is generally little depth to the articles’ content.

EXAMPLES:
Cosmopolitan, Ebony, Essence, Family Circle, Mother Earth News, Ms., Omni, Psychology Today, Parents Magazine, People Weekly, Popular Mechanics, Readers Digest, Rolling Stone, Sports Illustrated, USA Today

Newspapers
Purpose: To report news, and cultural events through news analysis and reporting. Papers also feature photographs, weather reports, editorials, essays, personal and syndicated columns, letters to the editors, comic strips, cartoons, advertising and reviews of books, movies and music.

Coverage ranges from national and international (New York Times, Washington Post) to events of local interest (Gainesville Sun, or the St. Augustine Record) depending upon the audience for the paper.

Newspapers are typically published daily, twice weekly or once a week, though there are exceptions. Traditional papers are printed on low quality tabloid sized paper, as well as online. Articles are written by professional journalists.

Newspapers are useful primary sources of information, printing full text of speeches, first hand reports of events, and elusive facts about local issues or events.

EXAMPLES:
Atlanta Journal and Constitution, Miami Herald, Boston Globe

Still Confused?
Sometimes it is hard to tell if a periodical is scholarly or popular, even after following the tips given in this handout. A periodical directory will give a description of the periodical’s publishing history, audience and tell if it is peer-reviewed.