The following questions will help identify characteristics found in most scholarly journal articles.

What are some of the general characteristics of a scholarly journal article?

• Are the author’s credentials listed? Is the article written by (and for) scholars?
• Does the article have a bibliography or list of references? Is it documented with footnotes, quotes, and bibliographic citations?
• Does the title of the article reflect its content?
• Is the article based on either original research or authorities in the field (as opposed to personal opinion)?
• Are there supporting diagrams or illustrations with the article?
• Is the article substantial (e.g., more than a few pages)?
• Is the article organized into at least two of the following sections (particularly in scientific and social science articles):
  a) Introduction or Literature Review,
  b) Theory or Background,
  c) Methods (how the research was performed),
  d) Results,
  e) Discussion or conclusion.

How are articles chosen for publication?

• Is the journal published or sponsored by a professional scholarly society or association?
• Did a board of reviewers scrutinize the article before its publication? (This type of journal is known as a “juried” or “refereed” journal.) When other scholars or experts (“peers”) review the article before its publication, it is a “peer-reviewed” journal. (To identify which “peer-reviewed” journals Messiah College owns, do a Boolean Keyword search for “peer-reviewed journal” (in quotes) in Murray Library’s online catalog.)

NOTE: This information may not be supplied in articles found online.

Limiting to Scholarly Journals in Academic Search Complete:

• After constructing a search, scroll down to “Limit your results” area.
• Check the box marked “Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals” before clicking on “Search.”