

Identifying Scholarly or Peer-Reviewed Journals

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.”



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