

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):
 - Introduction or Literature Review,
 - Theory or Background,
 - Methods (how the research was performed),
 - Results,
 - 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.

Limiting to Scholarly Journals in Library Databases

In many library databases, you can limit to scholarly or peer-reviewed journals through the limit or refine features. Often this is available on the left menu, or through an advanced search screen.