

Tips for Identifying Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals

What is a scholarly (peer reviewed) journal?

A scholarly (peer reviewed) journal contains articles that have been critiqued or reviewed by peers in a specific academic field or discipline. Peers are defined as colleagues or authorities in the same field. For example, the *Journal of Psychology* is a scholarly (peer reviewed) journal. Therefore, you can assume that the articles in this journal have been critiqued or reviewed by the scholars in the psychology field. This review process prior to publication ensures that the articles are of high quality.

How can I identify if a print journal is peer reviewed?

If you have the print copy of the journal that contains the article, you can turn to the editorial policy page toward the front of the issue and check if the editors state that the journal contains peer reviewed or refereed articles.

How do I identify if an online journal is peer reviewed?

There are many different databases available in the Kean University Library, and many of these databases provide features to filter or target scholarly (peer reviewed) articles. However, instead of providing you with directions for each database, it is recommended that you examine the full-text article itself and use visual cues to determine if a particular article is scholarly. Provided below are some recommended visual guides:

1. If the journal title actually contains the term "journal" this will be the first indication that the journal will be scholarly (peer reviewed). However, please note that there are publications with the term "journal" in the title that are not scholarly (peer reviewed), for example, the newspapers *The Daily Journal* or *The Wall Street Journal*.
2. In a scholarly (peer reviewed) article, the author(s) will most likely list their academic credentials and affiliations at the beginning of the article.
3. The scholarly (peer reviewed) article will usually begin with an abstract (summary) section.
4. The scholarly (peer reviewed) article will either introduce an original study or experiment, or alternatively will be a literature review that evaluates other scholars' research.
5. The scholarly (peer reviewed) article's tone is not opinionated, biased, or advisory. Rather, the scholarly (peer reviewed) article will present a hypothesis and support the hypothesis with facts, original research, and other scholars' cited works.
6. The scholarly (peer reviewed) article's cited references will be listed at the end of the article. This list of references or bibliography usually will be labeled with the term "References" or "Works Cited."

7. The scholarly (peer reviewed) article will treat the subject matter in a serious manner, not an entertaining or humorous manner. Images and illustrations are used sparingly and only when visual displays are deemed more appropriate than written text. Also, since a scholarly (peer reviewed) article treats subject matter in a serious manner, the article is usually fairly long.
8. The scholarly (peer reviewed) article uses scholarly terminology rather than slang. For example, a non-scholarly article about teenagers might use the term "teens," while a scholarly article is more likely to refer to this cohort group as "adolescents."
9. Many of the Library's periodical databases provide the opportunity to limit a search to scholarly (peer reviewed) articles. Although this will limit the search to articles in scholarly (peer reviewed) journals, search results may include letters to the editor, editorials, and book reviews, all of which are not peer reviewed articles.

What if I still am unsure if a periodical is scholarly (peer reviewed)?

If you are still unsure if a journal or an article is scholarly (peer reviewed), ask a Reference Librarian for assistance.