

Popular vs. Scholarly Sources

In the world of research, serials or periodicals are umbrella terms for magazines and journals. The following chart will give you some pointers to consider when you have to decide if your source is a scholarly or a popular source. Please remember that it is important to *a/ways* evaluate content regardless of the format (print, electronic, online, microform, or World Wide Web sources).

	Popular Magazine	Scholarly Journal
EXAMPLE	Time	Journal of Human Evolution
PURPOSE	Provides articles designed to inform or entertain	Presents news and results of original research to scholars and professionals
AUDIENCE	Mass audience, general readership	Specialized readers or peers in discipline
STYLE	Non-technical language	Technical/specialized language
AUTHORS	Editorial staff or freelance writers	Scholars and professionals in a specialized field
PUBLISHER	Usually published commercially and sold in large bookstores and magazine stores	Usually published by or in association with an academic institution or professional organization
ADS	Promotes a wide variety of products and services	Little or no advertising – will relate to the field
CITATIONS	Most sources are not fully cited	Sources are always cited through footnotes or bibliographies
REVIEW POLICY	Usually reviewed by an editor	Usually review by an independent panel of distinguished peers in their profession. Also known as peer-reviewed or refereed

- The terms “peer- reviewed” or “refereed” mean that a panel of distinguished peers in a particular field have read the articles contained in a particular journal in that field and have decided that they are of high scholarship and are supported by appropriate research.