




Teach Yourself: Understanding Scholarly Sources



When conducting research it is important to distinguish between journal articles and magazine articles. Journal articles are typically referred to as "scholarly," while magazine articles are usually considered "popular". A third category, "trade" magazines or journals, are written for professionals in a particular field but are not strictly research related. Below are additional criteria to consider when differentiating between journals and magazines.

Criteria	Scholarly Journal	Popular Magazine	Trade Magazine/Journal
Sample Cover			
Audience	Academics and Professionals	General public	People in the business
Authors	Experts or specialists (PhD). Unpaid.	Journalists, staff writers, or freelance writers. Paid.	Staff writers, industry specialists, or vendor representatives. Usually paid.
Editorial Review	Journal editorial board and peer reviewers. Unpaid.	Professional editors. Paid.	Professional editors or staff. Usually paid.
References/ Works Cited	Almost always	Rarely	Sometimes
Example Journal	Ecology	New Scientist	BioCycle
Stated Purpose	“Established in 1920, <i>Ecology</i> publishes research and synthesis papers on all aspects of ecology, with particular emphasis on papers that develop new concepts in ecology.” Published monthly by the Ecological Society of America	“Featuring a selection of the latest news stories from the worlds of science and technology” Published weekly	“BioCycle is recognized worldwide for its authoritative coverage on composting, organics recycling, anaerobic digestion, renewable energy and community sustainability.” Published monthly
Example Article Title	“Differential Impacts of Wildfire on the Population Dynamics of an Old-forest Species”	“Trump’s anti-science era begins”	“Economic Impact of Food Scraps Diversion”
Price	\$1203 USD/year (12 issues)	\$99 CND/year (52 issues)	\$79 USD/year (11 issues)

