








WHAT IS A PERIODICAL - "SCHOLARLY VS. TRADE VS. POPULAR"

	What is the "look"?	How carefully is it documented?	Who wrote the article?	Who is the audience?	Who publishes the periodical?	What is its purpose?	Examples
							
SCHOLARLY JOURNALS	Sober, serious. Lots of tables & graphs. Few, if any, pictures. Online charges for access.	Always has a bibliography (References or Works cited)	A scholar or researcher. Considered experts in their fields.	Scholars and others in the field. Language is scholarly and subject specific.	Usually a professional organization or university.	To report original research or experimentation	Journal of Drug Issues; Nature; American Sociological Review
PROFESSIONAL / TRADE JOURNALS	Attractive, often glossy. Advertise specialized products or services. Online looks very much like print sources.	Sometimes cite sources. Often secondary reporting of events or issues of interest to a profession.	Usually staff expert or professional writers.	Special profession or occupational group. Language may be technical or use jargon.	A commercial publisher or professional organization.	To provide information to those employed in a particular business or industry.	Advertising Age; Teaching Exceptional Children; OfficePro; Young Children; Women's Wear Daily;
POPULAR MAGAZINES	Attractive. Slick, lots of pictures and advertisements. Online looks very much like print sources.	Rarely cites sources.	Staff or freelance writers: sometimes well known person not necessarily expert in field.	General audience. Simple language. Articles short often lacking depth.	Commercial publisher.	To entertain, to inform, to sell, and/or promote a viewpoint.	Newsweek; Sports Illustrated; Readers Digest; Bicycling; Entertainment Weekly; People
Newspapers	Newspaper format but style may vary. Online looks very much like print sources.	No citations.	Staff or freelance writers.	General audience. Simple language. Articles short often lacking depth.	Commercial publisher.	Current events & news Primary source for popular culture Short articles Interviews Some book reviews	New York Times, Seattle Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post

Some periodical publications don't fit neatly into any one category. Especially in the "Popular" magazines some periodicals offer longer in-depth articles or specialize in a particular subject. **Always ask your instructor if she/he considers a particular journal "scholarly" or suitable.**

The subject matter and the perspective you're taking for your topic will determine whether **retrospective information** or **contemporary information** is most suitable for your research. **Retrospective Information** materials appear after an event or an idea occurs. They provide a perspective which looks back and reviews the event or idea in context. **Contemporary Information** materials contain information that is representative of the times in which they are written. They appear close to or at the time an event or idea first occurs and generally reflect the points of view prevalent when the materials were written.

Humanities Literature

General characteristics of the literature and scholarship:

- Focuses on the unique experience and study that the scholar brings to the products of recorded human thought and creativity, represented by original manuscripts and other primary sources.
- Research is qualitative rather than quantitative.
- Generally there are no "definitive" answers; direct causal relationships are not forthcoming.
- Scholars strive for interpretive validity.
- Scholars generally work alone, dealing either exclusively with primary sources themselves, or with the secondary literature surrounding these sources.
- Methodologies follow no universally prescribed norm.
- Due to the individualistic nature of the research, there is little sharing of information with colleagues before publication.
- Most research appears as journal articles or books. Timeliness of publication is of little consequence to the reader; reactions and debate may continue for years with no definite resolution.
- Books represent a relatively large proportion of the literature, allowing for in-depth exploration of context and interpretation.

Science Literature

General characteristics of research and scholarship:

- Study of the natural world, seeking to understand relationships that are assumed to be patterned.
- Objective investigation and experimentation strive to represent an understanding of generalities.
- Scientists seek experimental validity; integrity of the research methodology is as important as the results.
- Growth of scientific knowledge is cumulative. Therefore, immediacy and priority in discovery are critical.
- Scientists often work collaboratively, so multiple authorships are common.
- Research results are considered public domain, and are, therefore, openly shared and readily accessible.
- The primary product of the literature of scientific inquiry is the journal article, being current and concise.

Don't be fooled – not everything can be found easily on the Internet. While the Internet may contain up to millions of Web pages on a given topic, these pages are always not arranged in any systematic fashion nor are they necessarily high-quality, accurate, and appropriate sources. Remember – most anyone with Web-editing skills and Internet access can publish a Web page! With that said, the Internet can be an excellent resource for certain types of information, including information on companies, schools, the government, entertainment, and the latest news – as well as for primary source materials available in the ever-growing presence of quality online digital libraries.

GENERAL SUMMARY

- If you are looking for a more comprehensive analysis of your topic, look for **books**.
- If you are looking for more detailed scholarly analysis on some aspect of your topic, look for **journal articles**.
- If you are looking for an objective account of an event, look for **newspaper articles**.
- If you are looking for more obscure or esoteric information, pop culture topics, or historic primary documents, look for **Websites**.