Journals vs. Magazines: Is it Scholarly?

Scholarly Journals
Characteristics of scholarly journals (also known as academic or peer reviewed journals):

- Most are indexed in subject-specific periodical indexes
- Many are published or sponsored by a professional association, or university department
- Articles are reviewed by an editorial board that is made up of other scholars and researchers
- Most have little or no advertising

Examples: *Journal of Reading, Scientific American, Studies in Short Fiction*

Characteristics of a scholarly article:

- The author’s credentials are clearly stated
- Title often reflects the contents of the article
- An abstract (summary) is provided
- Content is based on original research or work of authorities in the field, not personal opinion
- Sources of information are cited in endnotes, footnotes, or bibliographies

A scholarly article from scientific journal usually includes the following:

- Supporting diagrams or illustrations
- An introduction or literary review
- Background information
- Statement of subjects being discussed
- Methods used
- Results of the study
- Discussion

Professional and Technical Journals
Although they may report concerns in professional fields and are intended for practitioners in those fields, professional and technical journals do not have the characteristics of scholarly journals. Always check with your instructors to make sure that they consider them acceptable for your research.

Examples: *Chemical & Engineering News, Aviation Week and Space Technology, Nursing*
Journals vs. Magazines: Is it Scholarly?

**News or General Interest Magazines**
- Usually published commercial enterprises or individuals, on occasion by professional organizations
- Purpose is to provide information to a broad audience, not just to scholars
- Language is geared to any educated audience; a specialized vocabulary is not necessary
- Articles are written by a member of the editorial staff, a scholar, or a freelance writer
- Sometimes authors cite sources, but usually do not
- Most have an attractive appearance (i.e., illustrations and photographs)
- Usually includes advertisements
- Often will have a political slant

Examples: *National Geographic, Time, Smithsonian, U. S. News & World Report, Newsweek*

**Popular Magazines**
- Articles are rarely signed
- Sources are rarely cited – information can be second or third hand, original source may not even be known
- Articles are usually very short with little depth
- Often published with a lot of pictures and graphics and are full of advertisements
- Published to entertain the reader, sell products, and/or promote a viewpoint

Examples: *Ebony, Glamour, Parent’s, Reader’s Digest, Sports Illustrated, Ladies’ Home Journal*