

Scholarly Journals vs. Magazines

Sometimes instructors will ask that articles for an assignment only be from scholarly journals. What is a scholarly journal? How does it differ from a magazine. The table below illustrates the differences between the two types of periodicals.

Scholarly Journals

Contents

- articles are academic in nature
- articles present the results of research or studies, often conducted by the author(s) of the article
- articles may be accompanied by charts, graphs, or pictures, but not generally by glossy, color photographs
- articles may be preceded by abstracts, which are short summaries of the content of articles
- articles often have bibliographies at the end, which are lists of works that authors have cited in their research
- scholarly journals have few if any advertisements

Authorship and Accountability

- authors are generally specialists in the field they are writing and their credentials are listed
- articles are "peer reviewed", meaning other specialists check the validity of articles before they are published

Audience and Writing Style

- primary audience is researchers, professionals, professors, and graduate students
- scholarly terms and jargon are used

Magazines

Contents

- articles are non-academic, or popular in nature
- articles present news or general interest stories; research and studies may be summarized or reported on also
- articles are often accompanied by glossy pictures; any charts and graphs are usually simple
- sources and research are not generally cited in bibliographies
- magazines generally have many advertisements with catchy graphics

Authorship and Accountability

- authors generally are not specialists in the field in which they are writing, but are journalists or staff writers for the magazine
- articles are reviewed by editors, but not necessarily by experts in the field being covered

Audience and Writing Style

- audience is the general public or nonprofessionals interested in the topics a specific magazine covers
- common language and words are used, specialized terminology is generally defined