



Victor Valley College Library

WHAT IS A SCHOLARLY JOURNAL?

A scholarly journal is a periodical that contains articles written by experts in a particular field of study. The articles are intended to be read by other experts or students of the field, and they are usually much more sophisticated and advanced than the articles found in general magazines. Many instructors assign research papers or projects that require students to read articles published in scholarly journals. This guide offers some tips to help distinguish scholarly journals from other periodicals.

Characteristics of a Scholarly Journal

Purpose

To communicate the results of recent research in the field of study covered by the journal. Scholarly articles reflect a systematic and thorough study of a single topic, often involving experiments or surveys. Scholarly journals may also occasionally publish review articles that summarize the current state of knowledge on a topic.

Appearance

Scholarly journals lack the slick advertising, want ads, coupons, etc. found in popular magazines. The articles inside are often printed one column to a page, as in books, and there are often graphs, tables, or charts referring to specific points in the article. Articles are always signed.

Authority

Scholarly articles are written by the person(s) who did the research being reported. When more than two authors are listed for a single article, the first author listed is usually the primary researcher who supervised or coordinated the work done by the other authors. The most highly-regarded scholarly journals are usually those sponsored by professional associations; for example, the American Psychological Association and the American Chemical Society.

Validity and Reliability

Articles submitted to scholarly journals are evaluated by an editorial board and other experts before they are accepted for publication. This evaluation, often called peer review, is designed to insure that the articles published are based on solid research that meets the normal standards of the field of study covered by the journal.

Writing Style

Articles in scholarly journals usually contain an advanced vocabulary, since the authors use the technical language or jargon of their field of study. The authors assume that the reader already possesses a basic understanding of the field of study.

References

The authors of scholarly articles always list the sources of their information. These references are usually listed at the end of an article, but they may appear in the form of footnotes, endnotes or a bibliography. Scholarly journals available in the VVC Library are identified with **bold** print in the periodicals holdings list.

Example:

TITLE	PAPER	MIRCO/BOUND
AMERICAN DESERT	Nov./Dec. 1992+	
AMERICAN ECONOMIC REVIEW		1991 + (M)
AMERICAN FILM		Oct. 1986 + (M)
AMERICAN FORESTS	1991 +	July 1965-90 (B)
AMERICAN HEALTH		1986 + (M)
AMERICAN HERITAGE		Feb. 1960-77 (M) Feb. 1980-88 (B)
AMERICAN HERITAGE INDEX	Dec. 1954-1987	
AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW		Oct. 1895 + (M)
AMERICAN HISTORY ILLUSTRATED	Mar/Apr 1993 +	April 1966- Feb. 1993 (B)
AMERICAN IMAGO		1991 + (M)
AMERICAN INDIAN QUARTERLY	1989 +	
AMERICAN JOURNAL OF ARCHAEOLOGY		1885 + (M)

Periodicals that are not Scholarly Journals

Popular Magazines

These are periodicals that one typically finds at grocery stores, airport newsstands, or bookstores in a shopping mall. Magazines are designed to appeal to a broad segment of the population, and contain relatively brief articles written in a readable, non-technical language. Examples include *Car and Driver*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Esquire*, *Essence*, *Gourmet*, *Life*, *People Weekly*, *Rolling Stone*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *Vogue*.

News Magazines

These periodicals, which are usually issued weekly, can be useful for information on topics of current interest, but their articles seldom have the depth or authority of scholarly articles. Examples include *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *U.S. News and World Report*.

Professional Publications

These periodicals cover a specific profession or field of interest and report on developments, trends and news in a profession, trade, or industry. Examples include *Library Journal*, *Automotive News*, *Psychology Today*, and *Nursing*.