

Comparing Magazines and Journals

Several features of popular magazines and scholarly journals make it relatively easy to distinguish one from the other, once you know what to look for. Some of these features may be harder to judge when the publication is part of an online database ... Look for a way to limit your search to "scholarly" or "peer-reviewed" titles.

	Popular Magazine	Scholarly Journal
Examples	<i>Time</i> or <i>Newsweek</i>	<i>Journal of Psychology</i>
Advertising	Highly visible, glossy, eye-catching	If any, ads are professional and related to the field
Articles	Often <i>not</i> signed by author	<i>Always</i> signed by the author(s)
Audience	General public	Targeted audience of scholars or professionals
Authors	Authors are generalists, staff writers, or freelance writers	Authors are experts in their fields--scholars and professionals, often university professors
Citations	Sources of information <i>not</i> fully cited, a bibliography is <i>not</i> included, <i>no</i> footnotes or endnotes	Sources are always fully cited, footnotes or endnotes are always given
Format	Informal, conversational style to appeal to general readers	The standard format of the field is followed: APA, MLA, Chicago (Turabian), etc.
Publisher	Published commercially	Often published by a university or professional association
Purpose	To inform or entertain	To keep scholars and professionals abreast of new research findings and techniques
Review Policy	Articles selected by an editor	"Peer reviewed:" articles selected by a panel of experts.
Style	Common vernacular is used	Specialized or technical language of the field is used.
Frequency	Usually weekly or monthly	Usually monthly or quarterly