



Articles may be found in scholarly journals, popular magazines, or trade magazines. The type you use depends on your research needs. Charts below compare articles, and journals and magazines as a whole. The other side of this guide contains descriptions of scholarly journals, popular magazines, and trade magazines.

Comparing Articles

	Scholarly Journal	Popular Magazine	Trade Magazine
Purpose	Present new research findings	Inform, persuade, or entertain	Communicate about a profession or trade
Author	Scholars listed with credentials	Journalists, staff, or free-lance writers	Members of a profession or trade
Publication Process	Refereed (reviewed by other scholars)	Edited	Edited
Structure	Often has title, abstract, introduction, review of literature, methods, findings, discussion, and conclusion	Varies	Varies
Style	Formal	Informal	Varies
Support of Argument	Research built on prior research	Confirmed sources	Professional knowledge

Comparing Journals and Magazines as a Whole

	Scholarly Journal	Popular Magazine	Trade Magazine
Purpose	Advance knowledge in a field	Inform, persuade, or entertain	Communicate within a profession
Scope	Limited to a field of study, or narrower	Varies, may be quite broad	Limited to a single profession
Publisher	Academic presses and learned associations; some for profit	For-profit publishers	Professional association
Audience	Scholars, students, and practitioners	Public-at-large	Members of a profession
Availability	Membership in an association, or library subscription	Widely available by subscription or purchase	Membership in an association, or library subscription
Appearance	Plain, except in visual fields	Eye-catching visuals and advertising	Varies

Scholarly Journals, Popular Magazines, and Trade Journals

Scholarly journals advance knowledge in a discipline by presenting new research findings. The articles are written by the scholars who conduct the research. In what is called the referee process, other scholars (referees) look at the scope of the article and the quality of the research to decide whether or not to accept the article for publication. The articles in scholarly journals are intended to engage an educated audience in conversation. They build on previous research (hence the extensive bibliographies) and provoke responses in the form of more research. Examples of scholarly journals include *Art Bulletin*, *Cell*, *Politics and Society*, and *The Astrophysical Journal*. Use scholarly journals for highly focused original research.

Popular magazines inform, persuade, or entertain. In an effort to attract a large general audience, they are made widely available. Staff writers and free-lance authors write the articles, which tend to be informal and easy to read and are often accompanied by colorful eye-catching illustrations. They write articles based on interviews with witnesses and experts. They seldom cite the articles or books they use for research. Most magazines make money by selling advertising, so popular magazines are often filled with glossy ads. Examples of popular magazines include *Newsweek*, *New Republic*, *Ms*, and *National Geographic*. Use popular magazines for a general overview of current news and opinions, or firsthand accounts of an event.

Trade, professional, and subject magazines are devoted to the interests of practitioners within a trade or profession. Trade magazines cover the interests of skilled laborers, technicians, and artisans. Professional magazines cover the interests of professors, librarians, and members of other fields that require advanced degrees. Subject magazines cover a topic of interest to one or more professions. Practitioners write articles based on professional knowledge about people and news in the field. Subject magazines are particularly good at reporting research findings published in scholarly journals. The UNM General Library owns more professional and subject magazines than trade magazines. Examples of professional magazines include *American Biology Teacher*, *Scholastic Coach*, and *Library Journal*. Examples of subject magazines include *Anthropology Today*, *Economist*, and *Scientific American*. Use trade magazines for overviews of news and research in a particular field.

The guidelines listed on the other side of this guide compare articles in journals and magazines, and journals and magazines as a whole. These hints will help you distinguish scholarly journals from popular and trade magazines, but only experience will make you adept at telling one from another.