

Scholarly or Popular?

Not sure if the article you have is a scholarly (sometimes called academic) or popular source? Ask yourself the following questions, and use the answers to decide if the article in question is considered scholarly or popular. Do a Google search for the name of the publication to find out more about it, too.

In the end, it's up to you to think critically, find out more information, and make a judgment call.

Ask yourself...	SCHOLARLY	POPULAR
Who is the intended reading audience?	Intended audience is other scholars, experts, or professionals.	Intended audience is the general public.
What kind of information does the article contain?	Contains original research or in-depth analysis.	Contains information on current events, topics of general interest, or interviews. Does not contain original research.
What is the writing level and level of detail?	Written using formal or technical language and assuming that the reader has a college education; may be very detailed.	Written using everyday language and assuming that the reader has a 6-8 th grade education; may not discuss the topic in detail.
Is the author an expert in the subject?	The credentials of the author—academic degrees earned, university affiliation, or job title—are included with the article and suggest that the author is an expert in the subject.	No credentials are given for the author or it is clear that the author is a journalist or writes on many topics.
What is the editorial review process?	Articles may be reviewed by outside experts in the subject prior to publication (peer review).	Articles are reviewed by editors who work for the publication and are not experts in the subject.
Is there a list of Sources/References/Works Cited?	Articles usually include source citations.	Articles usually do not include source citations even if sources are mentioned in the text.
Who is the publisher?	Publisher is often an academic society or university press.	Publisher has no affiliation to academic institutions or experts on the subject.

Note: Sometimes scholars (researchers, experts) write articles meant for the general population. Expertise alone does not make an article scholarly.

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