**What To Do When Your Instructor Says: Read A Scholarly Article**

Periodicals are publications that appear regularly (on a daily, weekly, or monthly schedule) and are intended to be published on an ongoing basis. Examples of periodicals (sometimes called serials) are magazines, journals and newspapers.

**Popular periodicals** (or magazines) are those you subscribe to or buy in the supermarket. Examples include *Newsweek, People,* and *Psychology Today,* as well as mass circulation newspapers. Magazine articles tend to be brief, topics are current, and the writing avoids specialized terminology. Articles from popular periodicals are rarely appropriate for graduate assignments.

**Trade and professional periodicals** relate to specific fields and are often part of membership in an association. Examples are *Nursing,* *HR Focus,* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education.* Trade and professional periodicals examine news, trends, and issues within a certain professional field. The writing often utilizes specialized terminology. Articles from professional and trade publications are acceptable for some graduate assignments.

**Scholarly journals** contain research results and in-depth articles. If your instructor asks you to select an article from a scholarly journal, look for a publication that has some or all of the following features:

- The overall tone of the journal is serious and academic.
- In many cases, the word *Journal* appears in the title of the publication.
- The journal is sponsored by a professional association, learned society, research center or institute, or academic institution.
- Members of editorial or advisory boards are listed.
- Articles submitted to the journal are sent to referees for a pre-publication evaluation. This means that all submitted articles are reviewed by a board of experts and judged for quality, relevance, timeliness, and credibility. Articles that do not satisfy the rigorous academic standards of the journal are not published.
- Authors are researchers or academicians.
- An author's credentials are always given.
- An abstract briefly summarizing the content precedes each article.
- Articles are substantial in length, many times running as long as twenty or thirty pages.
- The writing style is scholarly and the vocabulary specialized.
- The article contains tables, charts, diagrams or statistical formulae.
- There are few, if any, illustrations or advertisements.
- References to other publications (i.e. a bibliography) are cited at the end of the article or as footnotes.
The following are examples of citations for scholarly articles:


Most databases allow you to limit your search for articles specifically to scholarly journals, thereby eliminating the need to evaluate articles to determine whether they are scholarly. In the screen shot example below, notice that *Limit results to: Scholarly journals, including peer-reviewed* has been selected. By clicking in the box to select this option, you are limiting your search to articles about organizational change from scholarly journals only. Everything returned in your search results will be a scholarly article.

Look for this handy limiter when entering your search terms.

If you need additional assistance, please contact a librarian: [http://gcls.cmich.edu/reference](http://gcls.cmich.edu/reference)