

Characteristics of Scholarly/Popular Periodical Articles

Criteria	Scholarly	Popular
Author	Scholars with credentials in the field of publication	Journalists, staff, or freelance
Audience	Scholars, experts in the field, students of the discipline	Members of the general public
Publication Process	Refereed—peer-reviewed	Edited
Publisher	Published by an organization or association in the field, a university, or other reputable academic publisher	Published by a commercial publisher
Frequency of Publication	Usually published three or four times per year	More frequent—weekly or monthly
Structure	Title, abstract, introduction, review of literature, methods, findings, discussion, conclusion, notes, and bibliography/works cited	Varies
Style	Formal	Varies—often chatty or entertaining
Support of Argument	Based on prior research; contain explicit documentation of all sources	Confirmed sources
Purpose	To advance knowledge in the field	To inform, persuade, or entertain
Scope	Limited to field of study	Often broad
Appearance	Plain, sometimes with graphs, tables, maps, or photographs	Glossy photos and advertising
Access	Subscription only	Either subscription or available for purchase at newsstand or bookstore