



Library Exercise

University Library



Scholarly journal or popular magazine?

Objective: This exercise will help you figure out whether you are looking at a peer-reviewed journal or a popular magazine when you do your research.

Directions: Observe the periodicals in front of you. Some are journals, and some are magazines. Skim each periodical and observe the general appearance of each.

Look at one article in each. Think about how the article covers a topic and be prepared to say something about what you found. You may want to make short notes about each article. Then, take a look at the periodical overall.

Think about these elements:

About the article:

1. Title of the article:
2. Length of the article—paragraph(s) or pages?
3. Author(s):
4. Page number the article appears on:
5. Are there graphs or charts or photographs?
6. Are there references at the end of the articles?
7. Is the article a college level resource?
8. Is the article an actual study? How do you know?

About the periodical:

9. Who are the advertisers for each periodical? Give some examples.
10. In general, how many articles are in each periodical?
11. Number of pages in the periodical. What page number does the periodical start with?
12. How flashy is each journal or magazine? Glossy or dull?
13. What do you think is the reading level of each periodical?
14. Who do you think the target audience is? For each example indicate: age, possible socio-economic status, and education level.