



What's the difference?

Popular and scholarly articles explained

The following chart summarizes the differences between popular and scholarly literature:

	Popular literature	Scholarly literature
Purpose:	Popular publications (also called consumer publications) aim to inform readers about issues of common interest to the general public.	A scholarly publication is one that contains articles written by experts in a particular field of study. Rather than calling this kind of publication a magazine, we commonly use the term JOURNAL.
Characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informs or entertains readers, sells products, and/or promote a viewpoint • Audience is the general public • Often contains a lot of graphics, photographs, illustrations • Rarely cites other sources • Written by journalists who may or may not have subject expertise • Written in simple, non-technical language (may be more technical in popular science literature) • Only the editor of the publication reviews submitted articles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports on original research, theory, experimentation, and methodology. • Audience includes professors, researchers, college and university students • Assumes readers have an understanding of topic • Often contains charts, graphs and tables • Always cites sources • Written by scholars or researchers in the field • Uses the specialized language of the field • Articles submitted are reviewed by other experts in the field before publication (PEER REVIEWED or REFEREED)
Examples:	Newspapers: Vancouver Sun, Globe and Mail Magazines: Time, Maclean's, Discover, National Geographic, Scientific American Web sites: business, education, personal	Cell Journal of Cell Biology Nature Science Trends in Cell Biology

Tools to help distinguish popular & scholarly publications:

Ulrich's Periodical Directory	In Ulrich's, search for the publication title. The "Content Type" field will show Consumer	In Ulrich's, search for the publication title. The "Content Type" field will show Academic / Scholarly
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