

What is a Journal?

A journal is a periodical that contains articles written by experts in a particular field of study. They assume that readers have a knowledge of the field and its specialized vocabulary.

Some journals are peer-reviewed. This means that another expert checks the submitted articles before they are published. These types of journals may be called “scholarly journals,” “academic journals,” or “research journals.”

Journals can be in print or electronic format. Some are available both ways.

Scholarly Journals

- Report original research, discoveries, experimentation, reviews, or essays
- Are written by and for scholars and researchers in the field, and aimed at scholarly readers such as professors, scientists, and advanced students
- Cite sources and provide footnotes and/or bibliographies
- Are often peer-reviewed by an editor or specialists in the field for accuracy
- Often contain graphs, statistics, case studies
- Are often published by academic or association presses
- Contain selective advertising
- Will use graphs and charts

Example: [Nursing Research](#)

Journals are an excellent resource for your research!

Trade Journals

- Focus on a specific profession or industry
- Articles are written for professional or trade-associated audiences by scholars, freelance writers, or magazine staff
- Are published by professional or trade associations
- Articles occasionally cite sources
- Articles may include photographs, illustrations, industry-specific statistics, and information

Example: [American Journal of Nursing \(AJN\)](#)

Trade journals are an excellent resource for information on a specialized topic and a good way to stay current in your field!

**Note: Not everything in a journal is considered a "journal article" or a "research article." Journals often include book reviews, editorials, and news updates, etc. that do not qualify.*