

What is a peer-reviewed, scholarly article?

Peer-reviewed articles, also known as scholarly articles or academic articles, are written by scholars and researchers, and they are published in scholarly journals (see below). Peer-reviewed articles are about original research that the author has done, such as a research study.

These articles have to go through a process called “peer review” before being published. Scholars in the discipline, the author’s “peers,” evaluate the article draft for originality, veracity, & plausibility. Then they recommend whether the research should be published in the scholarly journal.

Peer-reviewed articles are narrowly focused and explore their topics in depth. They are based on either original research or authorities in the field (as opposed to personal opinion), and they are written for readers with some prior knowledge of the subject.

Note that newspaper and magazine articles are not peer-reviewed articles.

Scholarly articles typically have...

The diagram shows a sample page from the journal *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. The page title is "Patterns of minority and majority identification in a multicultural society" by Alita Nandi and Lucinda Platt. The article includes an abstract, an introduction, and a list of authors with their affiliations. Colored lines connect specific features of the page to descriptive text on the right:

- Blue line:** Points to the journal title and volume information: "Ethnic and Racial Studies Vol. 38, No. 15, 2615-2634, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2015.1077986". Callout: "Been published in a **scholarly journal**."
- Black line:** Points to the overall layout and tone. Callout: "An overall **serious, thoughtful tone**."
- Grey line:** Points to the length of the article. Callout: "More than 10 pages in **length** (usually, but not always)."
- Purple line:** Points to the abstract. Callout: "An **abstract** (summary) on the first page."
- Red line:** Points to the "Introduction" heading. Callout: "Organization by **headings** such as Introduction, Literature Review, and Conclusion."
- Green line:** Points to a citation within the text: "(Cameron 2011; Huntington 1993)". Callout: "Citations **throughout** and a bibliography or reference list at the end."
- Orange line:** Points to the authors' names and affiliations. Callout: "**Credentialed authors**, usually affiliated with a research institute or university."

What is a scholarly journal?

Scholarly journals, also known as peer-reviewed journals or academic journals, are like magazines for academics that contain the latest research in a specific field. These journals publish peer-reviewed original research articles written by scholars and researchers. They might also publish non-peer-reviewed content, such as book reviews. Examples of scholarly journal titles include *American Journal of Sociology*, *Renaissance Drama*, and *Behavioral Medicine*.

How do I find peer-reviewed articles?

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The easiest and fastest way to find peer-reviewed articles is to search the **online library databases**, many of which include scholarly journals. The Lloyd Sealy Library gives you access over 150 databases, including OneSearch, Academic Search Complete, and Criminal Justice Periodical Abstracts. Some databases contain a mix of scholarly/peer-reviewed articles as well as non-scholarly materials.

When you're using a library database, make sure your results come from scholarly journals by doing the following:

- Read the database description to determine if it features peer-reviewed articles.
- When you search for articles, choose the Advanced Search option. On the search screen, look for a checkbox that allows you to limit your results to "peer-reviewed" or "scholarly" only.
- See if your results can be organized by source. For example, some databases will let you choose the filter "Peer-reviewed (scholarly) journals."

If you are new to database research, view a video tutorial, "How to find articles in library databases," at jjay.cc/findarticles

Some peer-reviewed journals are available for free on the open Internet, but most are not, so you will find many (if not all) of your peer-reviewed sources through library databases. When you are doing research in library databases, always begin at the Lloyd Sealy Library website, otherwise you might not have access to the database's contents. If you're off-campus, you'll be asked to log in with your John Jay email credentials before using a database.

Database advanced search example

Keyword to search

AND

Limit to:
 Peer-reviewed articles Full text

Database page example

Keyword to search

AND

Filters

Type
 Scholarly article
 Magazine
 Book

Date
 Last 5 years
 Last 10 years

Subject
 Art
 Physics

Search results

Article title
Who wrote it - What magazine or journal it appeared in - When it was published
Sometimes, a blurb that mentions your keywords or the full abstract (summary) of the article
Article subject tag • Article subject tag

Book title
Who wrote it - Edition - When it was published
Sometimes, a blurb or summary of the book
Section & call number (in OneSearch)

Questions about finding sources? Ask a librarian!

Visit us at the Reference Desk, upstairs in the library anytime we're open

Email us libref@jjay.cuny.edu

Call us (212) 237-8246

Chat on the library website (M-Th, 11-5)

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