What is a scholarly journal article
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Someday soon you’ll need to find a scholarly journal article for a project or a research paper. Awesome, no problem. But wait a second, what is a “scholarly journal article?” How is it different from a popular source like a newspaper or a magazine article? Good question. Let’s break down the differences.

Scholarly journals enable scholars, experts in a particular academic field, to communicate their research with other experts by publishing articles. It also allows them to stay current by reading about other scholars’ work. Consequently, scholarly journals create a community of experts who are all participating in a kind of “conversation” in that academic field. Rather than a face-to-face conversation, this is a formal conversation, which takes place over months and years through these scholarly articles.

The most important part of this long term written conversation - what makes it a "scholarly" conversation, is what’s called the “peer review process.” The peer review process works like this: in order for a scholar to get published in a scholarly journal, his or her expert peers must first read their work and critique it. These “peer reviewers” make sure that the scholar has made valid arguments and that he or she has cited appropriate experts in the field to support that argument. This is why you may hear scholarly articles referred to as peer-reviewed articles. The terms are often used interchangeably. This rigorous evaluation process ensures that scholarly work meets a higher standard than popular publications, and it allows other scholars to rely on these articles for their own research.

So, why is this important for you? First, the information in a scholarly text has been carefully evaluated, so it’s more reliable and credible than information in popular sources. Second, reading scholarly journal articles for your projects can give you insight into professional argumentation and research practices. Finally, every scholarly text has extensive bibliographies that will introduce you to important texts in the field, which can then use to extend your research in that area. When you read these articles and books that the scholar cited in his or her article, you are taking part in the scholarly conversation and getting leads to additional sources for your own work.

Okay, so where are these scholarly articles hiding? Let’s say you are in a research database and you only want scholarly articles. How do you do it? In EBSCO’s Academic Search Complete, [showing on the screen] you check the box for “Scholarly or Peer-Reviewed Journals” before clicking the search button.[this is demonstrated in the video] This limits the search results to materials found only in peer-reviewed publications. Note that some material in these publications, such as book reviews and editorials may not be peer-reviewed. To make sure, click the
article title and check that the document type is an article or a journal article. Other research databases have similar features.

For more information on this, please ask us.