Napa Valley College – McCarthy Library

This guide is designed to teach the differences between popular and scholarly articles.

Popular Articles (Magazines)

- Are often written by journalists or professional writers for a general audience
- Use language easily understood by general readers
- Rarely give full citations for sources
- Written for the general public
- Tend to be shorter than journal articles

Examples of Popular Magazines:

![Popular Magazines Examples](image)

Scholarly Articles (Journals)

- Are written by and for faculty, researchers or scholars (chemists, historians, doctors, artists, etc.)
- Uses scholarly or technical language
- Tend to be longer articles about research
- Include full citations for sources
- Are often refereed or peer reviewed (articles are reviewed by an editor and other specialists before being accepted for publication)
- Book reviews and editorials are not considered scholarly articles, even when found in scholarly journals

Examples of Scholarly Journals:

![Scholarly Journals Examples](image)
Some points to remember:

- Both magazine and journal articles can be good sources for your work.
- When selecting articles, think about how you intend to use the information:
  - Do you want background on a topic new to you? (use magazines)
  - Did your instructor say to cite scholarly resources? (use journals)
- Often a combination of the two will be most appropriate for undergraduate research.