

## Scholarly Sources

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Scholarly sources are written by academics or scholars for an audience of other academics or scholars. They usually report the findings of a study or research project in a way that contributes to an ongoing debate, fills a gap in the knowledge of a topic, or intervenes by pointing out limitations to what scholars knew before.

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### Author, Audience, Purpose

Scholarly publications are the primary way that scholars and experts communicate the findings of their research to other scholars and experts.

Authors of scholarly journal articles are almost never paid, and authors of scholarly books usually earn a very small amount of money in the form of royalties, if they earn any at all.

The purpose is generally service to a community of inquiry and is rewarded with prestige within that community. The primary purpose of these publications is the advancement of scholarly conversations, though scholarly publications are sometimes differentiated from one another by particular editorial biases or inclinations.

#### Examples

- *Cultural Anthropology*
- *Journal of Applied Psychology*
- *Communication, Culture, and Critique*
- *Journal of American History*
- *Journal of the American Medical Association*

### Reliability

The peer review process is designed to ensure the quality of published scholarly work. Additionally, scholars are expected to provide a critical apparatus that includes a literature review, extensive citations, and a thorough demonstration of all claims. Scholars are expected to use appropriate evidence generated and processed using a well-designed and transparently documented research method. Additionally, scholars are expected to adhere to institutionalized ethical norms.

### Uses in the Research Process

For most university-level research, the peer reviewed scholarly literature will be most important. The credibility of the authors and assurance of reliability offered by the peer review process observed by most scholarly journals make these good sources on which to base research. However, careful analysis of the relationships between research questions, hypotheses, methods, evidence, and findings is still needed. These sources provide evidence relevant to research questions, theories to help understand topics, and examples or research methods to help shape research projects.

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## Tips for Identifying Scholarly Sources

### Publication Name

- Many scholarly journals are called “*Journal of...*”

### Bibliographic Information

- Scholarly journals usually have issue and volume numbers; page numbers usually start at the beginning of the volume, rather than the beginning of the issue.

### Genre

- Most scholarly articles will have several of these features: abstract, keywords, literature review, extensive citations to other sources, methods section, theory section, findings/results section and/or a body with substantial analysis of some primary text(s), conclusion, and references section.

### Language

- These sources are usually written in academic language specific to scholars in the field.

### Editorial Oversight

- Check the *UlrichsWeb* database to see if the source is refereed and has its content type listed as **Academic/Scholarly**. If it does not appear in *UlrichsWeb*, try googling the journal title. On the publisher’s website, look at the **About** page or submission guidelines for information about the peer review or refereeing process.

### How do I Find Scholarly Sources?

General purpose databases like *Academic Search Complete*, *ProQuest Research Library*, and *JSTOR* are good places to start. Once you have a few articles, one great way to find more relevant scholarly articles is through the citations found in these articles. Later, you might try more specialized tools like *APA PsycNET*, *MLA International Bibliography*, or *MathSciNET*. There are also many subject-specific EBSCO and ProQuest databases you should explore after you have exhausted the general databases.