Evaluating Articles

Articles generally come from newspapers, magazines or journals. It's important to be aware of the differences between popular periodicals (newspapers and magazines) and academic journals in order to determine which will be most appropriate for your research. Consider the following questions and view the comparison chart below:

1. Authority
   - Who are the authors?
   - Does the article include the author's credentials and/or affiliations?
   - What type of publication does the article appear in?
   - Does the publication have credibility and a good reputation?

2. Accuracy
   - Does the article cite references?
   - Is the work subject to peer review to determine the reliability of the content?

3. Objectivity
   - What is the purpose of the article?
   - Does the article present factual information or opinion?

4. Currency
   - When was the article published?
   - Does the article cover a recent topic?
   - If references are provided, when were they published?

5. Coverage
   - Does the article contain information relevant to your topic?
   - Who is the intended audience?
   - Do the articles within the periodical cover a wide range of topics or focus on a narrow subject area?
• Do the articles within the periodical provide overviews on topics or present original research?

Is It Peer-Reviewed?

Professors will often require their students to use peer-reviewed articles in their papers. A journal can be scholarly, but this does not always mean it's peer-reviewed. How can you be certain if an article is peer-reviewed or not? Here are a couple of tips to help you:

1. Let the database be your guide

Many databases allow you to refine your search to only peer-reviewed articles.

Some separate your search results for you and give you the option to view only the peer-reviewed results.

Some also provide an information page on the journal the article appears in and will indicate if the journal is peer-reviewed.


This "is a bibliographic database providing detailed, comprehensive, and authoritative information on serials published throughout the world." Simply enter the name of the journal in the database's search box to bring up information on it.

Note: this database uses the term "refereed" in place of "peer-reviewed."

Please ask staff at the Archer Library Help Desk if you need help in determining if your resource is peer-reviewed.
When is it ok…

…to use newspapers and magazines?

Newspapers and magazines can be valuable resources when you need:

- information on a current event
- primary sources
- background information on a topic
- interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>The Globe and Mail</th>
<th>Maclean’s Magazine</th>
<th>Journalism Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of periodical</td>
<td>newspaper</td>
<td>magazine</td>
<td>journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors</td>
<td>staff writers/journalists</td>
<td>staff writers/journalists</td>
<td>academics in the field of journalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>References cited?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content</td>
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<td>news and opinions covering a wide range of topics</td>
<td>scholarly articles in the field of journalism</td>
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<td>Intended audience</td>
<td>general reader</td>
<td>general reader</td>
<td>students and professionals in journalism</td>
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