

**Information Literacy Session 1 - Handout #1**

**Comparing Periodicals and Articles**

Articles may be found in scholarly journals, popular magazines and trade magazines. The type you use depends on your research needs. Use the charts below to help distinguish among the periodical and article types. Experience will make you adept at telling one from another.

**COMPARING JOURNALS AND MAGAZINES AS A WHOLE**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Scholarly Journal** | **Popular Magazine** | **Trade Journal** |
| **Purpose** | Advance knowledge in a field | Inform, persuade or entertain | Communicate within a profession |
| **Scope** | Limited to a field of study, or narrower | Varies, may be quite broad | Limited to a single profession |
| **Publisher** | Academic presses and learned associations | For-profit publisher | Professional associations |
| **Audience** | Scholars, students, and practitioners | Public-at-large | Members of a profession |
| **Availability** | Membership in an association, or library subscription | Widely available by subscription or purchase | Membership in an association, or library subscription |
| **Appearance** | Plain, except in visual fields | Eye-catching visuals and advertising | Varies |

**Scholarly Journals** – advance knowledge in a discipline by presenting new research findings. The articles are written by the scholars who conduct the research. In what is called the referee or peer-review process, other scholars look at the scope of the article and the quality of the research to decide whether or not to accept the article for publication. The articles in scholarly journals are intended to engage an educated audience in conversation. They build on previous research (hence the extensive bibliographies) and provoke responses in the form of more research. Scholarly journals should be used for highly-focused original research.

**Popular Magazines** – inform, persuade, or entertain. In an effort to attract a large general audience, they are made widely available. Staff writers and free-lance authors write the articles, which tend to be informal and easy to read and are often accompanied by colorful eye-catching illustrations. They write articles based on interviews and witnesses and experts. They seldom cite the articles of books they use for research. Most magazines make money by selling advertising, so popular magazines are often filled with glossy ads. Examples of popular magazines include: *Newsweek, National Geographic, People, and Rolling Stone.*

**Trade Journals and Subject Magazines** – are devoted to the interests of practitioners within a trade or profession. **Trade magazines** cover the interests of skilled laborers, technicians, and artisans. **Professional magazines** cover the interests of professors, librarians, and members of other fields that require advanced degrees. **Subject magazines** cover a topic of interest to one or more professions. Practitioners write articles based on professional knowledge about people and news in the field. Subject magazines are particularly good at reporting research findings published in scholarly journals. Examples of professional magazines include: *American Biology Teacher, Scholastic Coach, and Library Journal.* Examples of subject magazines include *Anthropology Today*, *Economist*, and *Scientific American*. Trade magazines should be used for overviews of news and research in a particular field.

**COMPARING ARTICLES**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Scholarly Journal** | **Popular Magazine** | **Trade Journal** |
| **Purpose** | Present new research findings | Inform, persuade, entertain | Communicate about a profession or trade |
| **Author** | Scholars listed with credentials | Journalists, staff, or free-lance writers | Members of a profession or trade |
| **Publication****Process** | Refereed (reviewed by other scholars) | Edited | Edited |
| **Structure** | Often has a title, abstract, introduction, review of literature, methods, findings, discussion, and conclusion | Varies | Varies |
| **Style** | Formal | Informal | Informal |
| **Support of** **Argument** | Research built on prior research | Confirmed sources | Professional knowledge |

# Information Literacy Session 1 - Handout #2

Website Evaluation Exercise URLs

<http://www.poedecoder.com/Qrisse/>

# Information Literacy Session 1 - Handout #3

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**CRAAP Test Form for Evaluating Websites**

**Title of Resource:**

**URL:**

**Currency: the timeliness of the information**

When was the information published or posted?

Has the information been revised or updated?

Is the currency of the information important for your topic?

Is the information current or out-of-date for your topic?

If it is an online resource, are the links working?

**Relevance: the importance of the information for your needs**

Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?

Who is the intended audience?

Is the information at an appropriate level for your purposes?

Have you looked at other sources before choosing this one?

Would you be comfortable using this source to complete a research paper or project?

**Authority: the source of the information**

Who is the author/publisher/source/organization/sponsor?

Are the author’s credentials or organizational affiliations provided?

What are the author’s credentials or affiliations?

Is there contact information for the author, organization, or publisher?

Does the web adress (URL) reveal anything about the source?.com (commercial); .edu (educational); .gov (government); .org (nonprofit organization); .net (network)

**Accuracy: the reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the content**

What is the origin of the information?

Is it supported by evidence?

Is it from a source that has been peer-reviewed or refereed?

Can it be verified in another source or from your personal knowledge?

Is there a bibliography or works cited list included?

Does the language or tone seem unbiased and free of emotion?

Are there spelling, grammar, or typographical errors?

**Purpose: why the information exists**

What is the purpose of the information? to inform? teach? sell? entertain? persuade?

Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?

Is the information fact? opinion? propaganda?

Does the point of view appear to be objective and impartial?

Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, or personal biases? If so, are they appropriate to the context of the resource and to your information need?

**Other Observations:**

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