

Popular Magazines to Scholarly Journals

	Popular	Popular/Informational	Scholarly
General Purpose	Entertainment magazines meant for casual reading (e.g. <i>Details</i> , <i>Rolling Stone</i> , <i>Premiere</i> , <i>Sports Illustrated</i>)	Some popular magazines contain substantive articles that provide solid information to an educated audience, but they usually do not cite sources (e.g. <i>Economist</i> , <i>Scientific American</i> , <i>Natural History</i> , <i>The New Yorker</i>)	Includes peer-reviewed, highly academic articles, studies, or reports (e.g. <i>Journal of Sociology</i> , <i>Journal of American History</i> , <i>Journal of Modern Literature</i>)
Article Length & Intended Audience	Short articles written by professional writers to entertain or inform a general audience.	Medium to long articles written by professional writers or scholars for an educated audience.	Lengthy articles written by experts or scholars for a professional or academic audience in a specific field.
Paper Quality	Paper quality is typically glossy or slick – appeals to a browsing public.	Paper quality may vary – sometimes glossy, sometimes not glossy.	Paper quality is generally “rough” or <i>not glossy</i> .
Writing Style	Articles are written in an informal or journalistic style that is typically aimed at the general public (normally written at a fifth grade reading level).	Written in a journalistic or “creative non-fiction” style using a vocabulary intended for a more educated audience.	Written in a formal, scholarly, or technical style using a vocabulary that requires a higher level of knowledge about the subject.
Author Credentials	The author’s credentials are not usually indicated.	The author’s credentials are often indicated at the front of the journal.	The author’s credentials are usually given near the beginning or at the end of the article.
Sources	Sources are rarely documented.	Sources are often documented through references in the text, but rarely as a separate bibliography.	Sources are credited in footnotes and/or a bibliography.
Editorial Review	Articles reviewed by a staff editor for style.	Articles reviewed by editor and often passed through a “fact-checking” department to verify accuracy.	Typically reviewed or evaluated by an author’s peers or specialists in the field prior to publication.
Purpose of Publication	Purpose is to make money, which they do by selling advertisements for mass-culture products (e.g. iPods, watches, liquor, etc.)	Purpose of the publication is to both inform and make a profit. Typically includes advertisements for mass-culture products and/or academic items, like books.	Purpose of the publication is to share information. Articles are based on original research or they are works of criticism.
Published by	Published by commercial presses.	Published by commercial presses.	Published by academic presses, professional associations, or universities. If there are advertisements, they are typically for publications or conferences related to journal’s subject area.