

What Kind of Articles Should I Use in my Research Project?

When you search for and review preexisting literature for your Research Methods project, try to use scholarly articles (if that is possible). You may discover information from many sources, to include the following:

1. **Scholarly Journals**
2. **Professional Journals**
3. **Entertainment Magazines (inappropriate for use in a Research Methods project)**
4. **Government Websites**

What is the difference in the above 4 listed sources? The differences are explained below:

1. Scholarly Journals

[Scholarly](#) journals have academic articles in them. They are also called “periodicals” in the library. They are written by researchers in specific areas of study, such as in criminal justice, business, the medical field, etc. To achieve recognition as being scholarly, an article is first submitted to other [peer](#) researchers (who are usually in the same academic discipline) to be “peer reviewed,” [critiqued](#) and evaluated. Peer reviewers determine if the article should be published in a scholarly journal. This review process helps to ensure that only high-quality research articles are published in scholarly journals.

- Key: Authors of scholarly articles must cite the sources that they use in their paper.

2. Professional Journals or Trade Journals

Professional journals are also known as [trade](#) journals. They are written by [subject matter experts](#) for people who work in a specific trade. For example, there are professional journals for criminal justice in specialized areas such as forensics, school resource officers, fraud investigations, corrections, parole operations, etc. Trade journals require an author to have [background knowledge](#) about their profession. The articles that they write are not necessarily scholarly. Trade journals are somewhere “between scholarly journals and magazines.” Professional articles address specific workplace issues by providing insightful solutions.

- Keys: Professional articles are written by subject matter experts who provide innovative solutions and ideas for overcoming unique workplace issues.
- They are not required to cite sources because authors are subject matter experts.

3. Entertainment Magazines

Journalists write interesting articles for magazines, either for entertainment or to provide information – or for both. Journalists may or may not have subject matter expertise about the topic that they are writing about. They present information to a large audience, to the public, and to laypeople, professionals, retirees, students and anyone else who will pay for the magazine. Generally, entertainment magazines are not appropriate for academic research, although there may be occasional exceptions. Examples of entertainment magazines include:

- ✓ Entertainment Weekly – <https://ew.com/>
- ✓ Daily Mail – <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/>
- ✓ Star Magazine – <https://starmagazine.com/>
- ✓ People Magazine – <https://people.com/>
- ✓ Etc.

- Key: Entertainment magazine are not required to provide references at the end of each article.

4. Government Websites

City, county, state and federal government websites may publish criminal justice data that is relevant to your research methods project, such as crime statistics, recidivism rates, incarceration rates, juvenile crime rates, case studies, legal or [legislative](#) updates, etc.

- Key: The usefulness of government websites varies greatly.

That's it!