

## EVALUATING THE QUALITY OF PERIODICALS

Friday, August 06, 2004

Periodicals are commonly broken down into four categories of “substance”. The four categories we will refer to in this class are scholarly, substantive, popular, and sensational.

Periodical Categories	Scholarly	Substantive	Popular	Sensational
<b>Description</b>	Data ‘heavy’; sources are cited in the form of footnotes or bibliographies; articles are written by experts in the field; reports original research; purpose is to make new information available to experts	Usually more attractive in appearance, more photographs, may be written by a scholar, freelance writer, or editor, no specialty assumed, purpose is to provide information to a broad audience	Slick and attractive in appearance. Loaded with graphics. Information sources are not commonly cited, articles are short, targets a broad audience with a minimal education level; primary purpose is to entertain, secondary purpose is to inform	Typically in newspaper format. Language may be inflammatory or sensational. Target the masses. Flashy headlines to draw people in and get them to purchase.
<b>Examples:</b>	<i>American Economic Review</i> <i>Science</i> <i>Nature</i> <i>The Journal of the American Medical Association</i>	<i>Economist</i> <i>National Geographic</i> <i>New York Times</i> <i>Scientific American</i> <i>Discover</i>	<i>People</i> <i>Time</i> <i>Newsweek</i> <i>Readers Digest</i> <i>Sports Illustrated</i>	<i>Globe</i> <i>National Examiner</i> <i>National Enquirer</i> <i>Star</i> <i>Weekly World News</i>

Adapted from: Cornell University Library: Distinguishing Scholarly Journals from Other Periodicals; Available On-line at <http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill20.html>