HCC Library logo

# **What is a Periodical?**

A periodical is a publication that is published on a regular basis (daily, monthly, quarterly, etc.).

# Periodicals can be broken into four groups:

1) Scholarly Journals contain articles written by experts in a subject area that report

results of research and other scholarly activities. For most academic papers,

scholarly articles are preferred sources for supporting your arguments.

2) Trade Publications contain articles that keep practitioners up to date in their industry/trade.

3) Magazines present articles of popular interest on a variety of subjects.

4) Newspapers report current happenings and opinions.

# Use the chart below to help you understand their differences:

| Criteria | Scholarly Journals | Trade Journals | Magazines | Newspapers |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Purpose** | Report research & advance knowledge in a field | Provide news or information to practitioners in an industry or trade | Entertain, inform, persuade | Entertain, inform, persuade |
| **When to Use** | Need a research study to support your thesis; want to know what research has already been conducted on a topic | Need insider coverage of industry trends/ statistics, practices product reviews and patents | Need coverage of news and events, or general info. on a topic | Need coverage of news and events as they unfold |
| **Review Process** | Reviewed by scholars or experts in a field before it is published (peer review); article’s information is verified and research methods are examined | Reviewed by editorial staff with subject expertise | Reviewed by editorial staff; usually do not have subject expertise | Reviewed by editorial staff; usually do not have subject expertise |
| **Audience** | Scholarly researchers, faculty, students and professionals | Members of an organization, business or industry | General public | General public |
| **Author** | Experts in a field | Experts in a field | Editorial staff, or a freelance writer; may not have subject expertise | Editorial staff, or a freelance writer; may not have subject expertise |
| **Content** | Original research studies, analysis of research and literature reviews; if original research, articles will typically contain an abstract, goals & objectives, methodology, results, discussion, conclusion, and a bibliography | New techniques, industry trends, statistics, job listings, patents and product reviews | News, events and popular opinions | News, events and popular opinions \*\* News/events may be more current in a newspaper than in a magazine, as most major newspapers are published daily. |
| **Appearance** | Few illustrations: tables of statistics, charts, graphs, maps, few or no advertisements | Glossy paper, illustrations, photos, some relevant advertisements | Glossy paper, illustrations, photos, many advertisements | Contain illustrations, photos, many advertisements |
| **Language** | Specialized vocabulary/ jargon of the field | Specialized vocabulary/ jargon of the field | Simple language; non-technical; written at an 8th grade reading level | Simple language; nontechnical; written at an 8th grade reading level |
| **References** | Contain footnotes & bibliographies that cite other scholarly sources | Short bibliographies | Not usually | Not usually |