

# What Type of Publication is Your Source?

Journals, magazines, newspapers and many nonfiction books can be analyzed according to the following criteria

|                               | <b>SCHOLARLY</b><br>(sometimes called<br>"Academic")  | <b>TRADE,<br/>PROFESSIONAL,<br/>TECHNICAL</b>  | <b>SUBSTANTIAL<br/>NEWS / GEN-<br/>ERAL INTEREST</b>   | <b>POPULAR</b>  | <b>SENSATIONAL</b><br>(also called "Tabloid")   |
|-------------------------------|---|--|--|---|---|
| <b>PURPOSE</b>                | To inform, report or share original research or experimentation   | To report on an industry or profession; to help people do their jobs better; may list jobs   | To inform  | To entertain or persuade (hidden agenda may include selling products or services)               | To entertain  |
| <b>AUTHORS</b>                | Scholars, researchers, professors, upper-level graduate students  | People working in a particular profession, field or industry   | Editorial staff, journalists, experts, and/or free-lance writers   | Editorial staff, journalists or free-lance writers  |   |
| <b>AUDIENCE</b>               |   | People working in a particular field or industry   | Generally educated audience  | Wide audience   |   |
| <b>REVIEW PROCESS</b>         | Reviewed by peers within the discipline ("peer reviewed" or "refereed")   | Minimal review by editorial staff and rarely by peers  | Minimal review by editorial staff  |   |   |
| <b>APPEARANCE/<br/>FORMAT</b> | Plain, text-heavy, "academic" looking   | Generally business-like  | May look more interesting and/or varied  | Usually slick, glossy, high-interest and/or eye-catching  | Slick and glossy or "tabloid" (newsprint)   |
| <b>GRAPHICS</b>               | May contain graphs and charts but usually plain and with minimal color  | Usually have photographs, illustrations and graphics   | Mostly photographs, sometimes illustrations and drawings   |   | Lots of photographs with varying degrees of quality and authenticity  |
| <b>LANGUAGE</b>               | Terminology, jargon and specialized language of the discipline; reader is assumed to have scholarly background  | Terminology and jargon of the field but usually informal in tone   | Aimed at educated readership; not necessarily specialized but assume a certain level of intelligence                                 | Simple language to meet minimum education level; articles are usually short with little depth   | Simple language, slang, exaggerations, "gossip" and sensational to titillate readers                                      |
| <b>SOURCES</b>                | Sources cited (footnotes and/or bibliography)   | Sources may not be noted, or there may be only a few footnotes   | Sources occasionally cited, but this is exception to rule  | Sources rarely cited; original sources may be obscure   | Unnamed or unidentified sources (if at all)   |
| <b>PUBLISHERS</b>             | Often a professional organization/society or university press   | Usually a professional association   | Commercial enterprises (for profit)  |   |   |
| <b>ADVERTISING</b>            | No advertising or very minimal, selective advertising   | Advertisements are aimed at people in specific profession  | General advertising  | Extensive general advertising   |   |
| <b>EXAMPLES</b>               | <i>New England Journal of Medicine</i><br><i>Journal of the American Chemical Society</i><br><i>Harvard Business Review</i><br><i>The Sociology of Post-Colonial Societies</i> [book] | <i>American Biology Teacher</i><br><i>Chemical &amp; Engineering News</i><br><i>Advertising Age</i><br><i>The Economics of Microfinance</i> [book] | <i>Scientific American</i><br><i>Psychology Today</i><br><i>Newsweek</i><br><i>Forbes</i><br><i>What's Your Corporate IQ?</i> [book] | <i>People Weekly</i><br><i>Esquire</i><br><i>Reader's Digest</i><br><i>Marley and Me</i> [book] | <i>National Enquirer</i><br><i>Us Weekly</i><br><i>Star</i><br><i>Winning Lotto / Lottery For Everyday Players</i> [book] |
| <b>WHY USE THEM?</b>          | Required by professor; to add credibility to your own ideas or hypotheses   | To understand issues in a field or industry; to prepare for a job interview  | To identify potential topics for a research project; to identify current events and hot topics                                       | Leisure reading   |   |