

# Know How Research Skills: Finding Periodical Articles

## Tutorial Transcript

### Introduction

**Slide 1:** Welcome to the Know How Research Skills!

This short tutorial will give you the know how to find periodical articles for your class assignments.

As you go, you will take a few short exercises that you must complete successfully to get to the end. When you are done, you will be able to print out a certificate or email your instructor that you have done this tutorial. Your work will not be saved so please follow directions carefully.

### Part I

**Slide 1:** Let's begin.

Part I: Periodicals.

**Slide 2:** When you think of the library, you probably think of books, and you would be right. We have lots of books, and e-books, and thousands of videos, but we also have periodicals.

**Slide 3:** Periodicals are anything that is published on a regular schedule, like every week or every month.

**Slide 4:** You are probably familiar with many types of periodicals already, like newspapers and magazines. In fact, there are a number of different types of periodicals, a whole family in fact. They are all related in that they are all periodicals but they can be different as night and day.

For the purpose of this tutorial, we are going to focus on three categories: popular magazines, serious magazines, and scholarly journals.

Journals, for example, may be new to you, but it is very important that you know the differences between magazines and journals because journals are essential to college research.

**Slide 5:** So how do you tell them apart? If you are using the paper copies, it's pretty easy to tell.

Popular magazines are primarily for entertainment. The authors of articles in these magazines are usually journalist and have no expertise on the subjects they are writing about.

Popular magazines are also pretty. They are glossy with lots of colorful pictures and ads; the kind of covers that catch your eye on a newsstand.

Because magazines are not intended to educate and frequently feature stories about celebrities and trivial events, they are usually not appropriate sources for the information you use for your papers and projects.

**Slide 6:** A cousin of the popular magazine is the serious magazine. Although this is not a technical term, the point is that you will find articles in these magazines about weightier subjects like politics or medicine, as opposed to the light and entertaining stories found in popular magazines. Most newspapers would also fall into this category.

Serious magazine articles are still usually written by journalists and are therefore not necessarily experts on the topics about which they are writing.

Periodicals in the category still have some eye appeal and you may find them at your local newsstand, but the articles typically have less pictures and more text.

Think about it another way. If popular magazines are like the E! Entertainment Channel, then serious magazines are like CNN or Fox News. It's news, but it's still pretty flashy and meant for a general audience.

In many cases, articles from serious magazines may be suitable sources for your college papers and projects, unless your instructor has specifically asked for scholarly articles.

**Slide 7:** This brings us to journals, the less attractive and smarty-pants member of the periodical family. Or, if popular magazines are E! News, and serious magazines are CNN, then scholarly journals are PBS; not a lot of flash but a lot of information.

Most likely you won't find journals on a newsstand because they have no shiny pictures and feature very few ads. Journals are very text-heavy, in fact articles in journals can usually run anywhere from 3 to 20 pages long.

Other signs to look for are charts and graphs, or the presence of a bibliography or a list of references.

They also appeal to a much smaller audience. Articles in journals are where original research shows up. They are written by experts, usually university faculty or research scientists. An author's credentials will almost always appear somewhere in the text of the article. A credential is something that shows qualification or authority, in this case, the author's job title and where he or she works would indicate that the author is qualified to write about the topic.

**Slide 8:** Articles in journals go through a process called peer-review. A group of scholars in the field review the articles and decide if it is accurate and if it covers new territory. If it passes, it is published.

Your instructor may ask you to use peer-reviewed or scholarly articles, these terms all refer to articles from journals. In general, the information in journal articles is considered more reliable than articles in magazines.

**Slide 9:** To review, popular magazines like People and US Weekly are too light weight and trivial for college level research, so just ignore them.

A combination of serious magazines and scholarly journals is more appropriate for most college level papers and assignments. However, some instructors may require that you use only articles from scholarly journals. And remember, they may refer to these articles as scholarly, peer-reviewed or journal articles.

If you still have questions about what is the most appropriate source for your assignment, talk to your instructor or ask a librarian.

Now you try. Can you tell one periodical from another?

## **Part II**

### **Slide 1:** Part II: Electronic Databases.

So now you know the differences between magazines and journals, but these days we get most of our articles by using online databases.

Databases are electronic resources, or e-resources, that let you search for articles from magazines and journals on a variety of topics, much like you use a search engine to search for information on the Internet, except in this case, you can avoid all the unreliable junk on the web.

**Slide 2:** Databases can come in lots of shapes and sizes, and they can go by a few different names. You may hear them called databases, or e-resources, or periodical indexes, but these are all names for the same thing.

ACC has a number of electronic databases in our E-Resources collection.

**Slide 3:** To access the E-Resources collection, go to the library's homepage at [library.austincc.edu](http://library.austincc.edu).

In the menu to the left of the screen click on Articles & Research.

**Slide 4:** And then click on E-Resources by Subject.

**Slide 5:** This page gives you three different ways to access the many databases in ACC's collection.

To see an alphabetical list of each database by its name, click on the corresponding letter. This feature is most useful when you already know the name of the database you wish to use.

You can also locate databases by subject. ACC has lots of databases to choose from and many are specialized to specific subject areas. Clicking on any of the subjects on this page will direct you to a list of recommended databases for that subject.

And last but not least, you can see a list of our All Purpose Resources by clicking this link below. These are general databases that cover a number of different subjects and therefore are not specialized to any one specific area. These databases are usually a good place to begin your research.

Now let's see if you've been paying attention. Can you find ACC's electronic database collection?

### Part III

#### Slide 1: Part III: Searching and Results Lists

So now that you know where to find ACC's databases, let's take a closer look at one.

From the E-Resources by Subject page, click on the All Purpose Resources link. Remember, these databases are general databases, so they cover many different subject areas.

**Slide 2:** Academic Search Complete is a general database. It is useful for almost any topic and it is also our largest. It has the full text of articles from over 5300 periodicals, so this means you could find articles from popular magazines, serious magazines or journals all in this one database.

Click on Academic Search Complete to access the database. If you are off campus, you will need your ACCeID.

**Slide 3:** At this point, you should already have a topic in mind and you should have selected a few keywords that best describe that topic. To locate articles about your topic, type those keywords into the search box and click Search.

**Slide 4:** A list of articles from magazines and journals will display, this is your results list. As you can see from this example, all of these articles contain the keyword 'anorexia.'

What you may also notice is that there are no shiny ads or glossy covers to help you determine what's popular, serious, or scholarly!

That's OK! Although many of the superficial characteristics are missing, you can still find a lot of the important characteristics that distinguish magazines from journals from the electronic version.

**Slide 5:** The first thing to note is the name of the periodical and the title of the article. Although you may not recognize every magazine or journal by name, odds are you are familiar with many of the popular magazines like People or Sports Illustrated. Remember, you can ignore most popular magazines. And even if you don't recognize the name of the periodical, the title of the article can tell you a lot about that publication. For example, there's a big difference between "Mission Impossible" and "Behavioral Management for Anorexia Nervosa."

Next, check to see if there is an author given. Most articles from serious magazines and scholarly journals will give an author. And notice, they do not list the author's credentials here; you will need to look at the text of the article to locate that information, but more on that later.

Also, pay attention to the length of the article. Don't bother with articles less than one page long. Remember the characteristics of journal articles? Sometimes they can be up to 20 pages

long, sometimes even longer, so the number of pages can help you determine if the article is from a magazine or a scholarly journal.

**Slide 6:** To make it clearer, here's an example of how I would begin making choices from this list of search results.

The first article has an author listed and it's from JAMA, The Journal of the American Medical Association, so it looks promising. But it's only 1/3 of a page long so it's too short to be useful.

The second article also has an author listed and is from a notable medical journal. This one is eight pages long. So that should have some in-depth content. It's still in the running.

The third one is from Newsweek, have you seen that one on the newsstand? It's what I would consider a serious magazine, and there is an author listed, but it's only one page long. This might be useful but I can probably find better.

The fourth one is from another serious magazine, Psychology Today, but it's too short, 1/3 of a page.

The fifth one is from People magazine, a popular magazine. There are authors listed and it's nine pages, but the fact that it is a popular magazine means that it is probably fluff and not appropriate for a college assignment. So no thanks.

So of these five sources, the second one, from the New England Journal of Medicine, is most likely to be the most appropriate article for a college level assignment.

Now it's your turn. What periodical articles would you use?

## **Part IV**

**Slide 1:** Part IV: The Periodical Article.

Once you have found articles from your results list that may be appropriate for your assignment, the only thing left to do is to make a final decision. There is no better way to determine if an article is appropriate for you and your needs than reading the article.

To read the article you will need access to the full text of the article. Full text is the whole text of the article.

**Slide 2:** From the results page, you must click on the link that reads PDF Full Text, HTML Full Text, or Linked Full Text. All of these options will take you to the entire text of the article, but each different type looks a little different.

Let's take a closer look. This time our topic is global warming and here is our results list. It looks like this article from the Journal of Climate is most likely to be useful because it is from a journal, it's 19 pages and it has two authors listed.

**Slide 3:** Let's click on the full text link to see the whole article.

Articles from scholarly journals share a number of easily identifiable characteristics that can only be found when you view the full text.

Here you see the author's credentials. As we discussed earlier, these are the author's qualifications.

An abstract or short summary of the article and its research can usually be found at the top of the page. Charts and graphs may also be present in the text of the article.

**Slide 4:** Scholarly journal articles usually have a bibliography or list of references at the end of the article. This lets you know that the author did her homework; it can also be used to find more information on the topic.

**Slide 5:** Congratulations! You have completed the tutorial on finding periodical articles and you know how to...

- Identify types of periodicals
- Distinguish between popular magazines, serious magazines, and journals
- To locate and search an electronic database
- To examine a results list for the most appropriate resources
- And finally, upon viewing the full text, to determine which article is the most appropriate for your assignment

**Slide 6:** To print or email your instructor a copy of your certificate of completion, please follow the instructions on the screen. Remember, your work will not be saved so you must obtain a copy of this certificate before you exit the tutorial.

If you still have questions or need any assistance, ask a librarian in person at any campus library or email, call or chat. To find out how to contact us visit our web page at <http://library.austincc.edu>.