



Guide to Popular vs. Scholarly Periodicals

This guide compares the characteristics of a popular magazine or article to a scholarly journal or article.

What is a Periodical?

Magazines and journals are called periodicals because they are issued on a regular or “periodic” basis. Periodicals are usually separated into two major groups: popular and scholarly. If you are able to recognize the differences between a popular and scholarly source, you can focus your research to retrieve only the type of information you need. Review the table below for the differences.

Characteristics of Popular and Scholarly Publications		
	Popular Magazines	Scholarly Journals
Purpose:	Entertain Report current events Summarizes research of current or general interest	Report research
Audience:	General public	Scholars, researchers and students a particular field of study
Authors:	Journalists generally unnamed	Researchers always named
Style:	Short Contains many pictures and advertisements No citations Not peer-reviewed*	Long (5+pages) Describes research methodology Citations Peer-reviewed or Refereed*
Examples:	Rolling Stone Newsweek Sports Illustrated	Musical Quarterly New England Journal of Medicine Journal of American History

***Peer-reviewed or Refereed articles are those articles reviewed by a select panel of recognized experts and accepted for publication in a journal in the field of study covered by that journal.**

How Do I Tell If My Article is From a Peer-Reviewed or Refereed Publication?

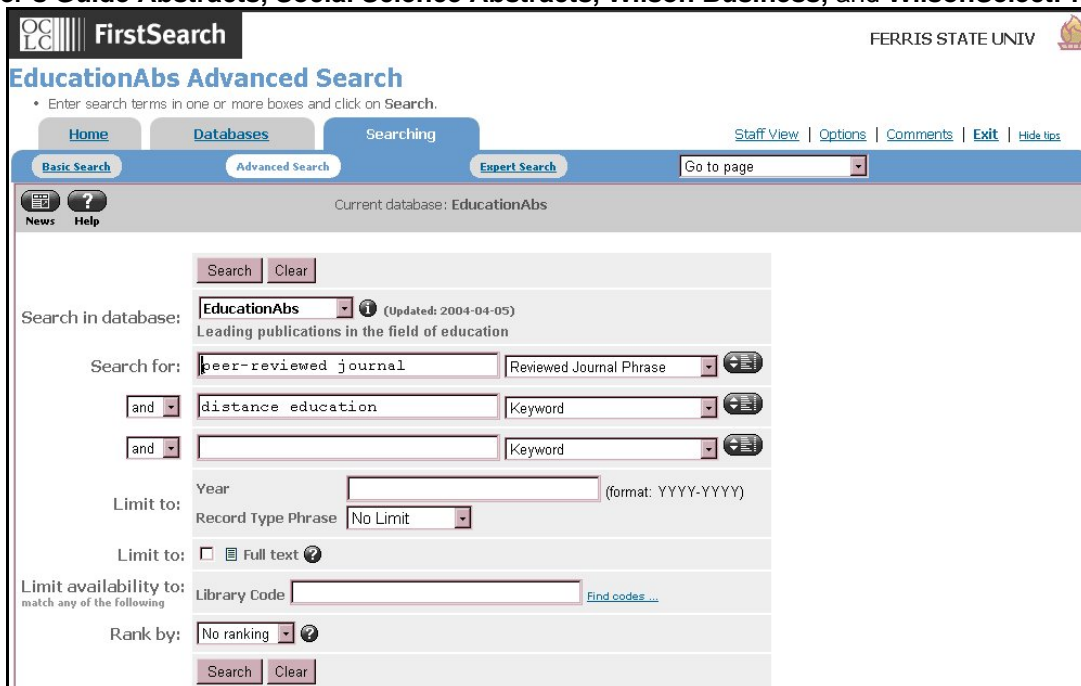
Some of the article databases to which FLITE subscribes allow you to limit results to peer-reviewed or refereed articles. There are also other resources that help distinguish publications.

In **General OneFile**, check the box under “Limit the current search” labeled “to peer-reviewed publications” to ensure that all articles returned from the search are refereed or peer-reviewed.



Several **FirstSearch** databases allow the peer-reviewed or refereed publications limit as well. In the drop-down menu next to a search box, look for and select “Reviewed Journal Phrase” and then type in “peer-reviewed journal.”

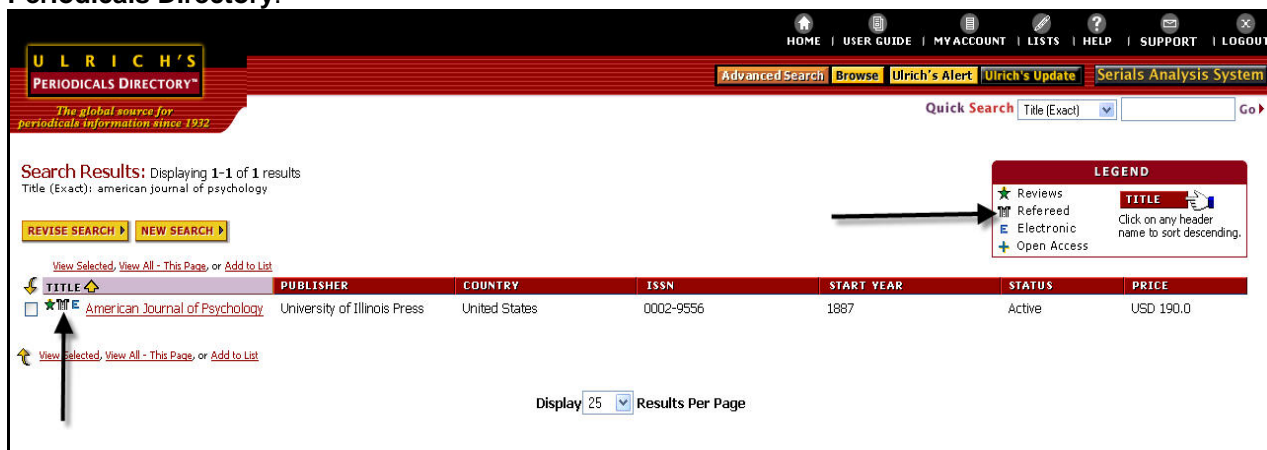
The **FirstSearch** databases which allow for the peer-reviewed limit are **Art Abstracts**, **Applied Science and Technology Abstracts**, **Biological and Agricultural Index**, **Biography Index**, **Educational Abstracts**, **General Science Abstracts**, **Humanities Abstracts**, **Library Literature**, **Reader’s Guide Abstracts**, **Social Science Abstracts**, **Wilson Business**, and **WilsonSelectPlus**.



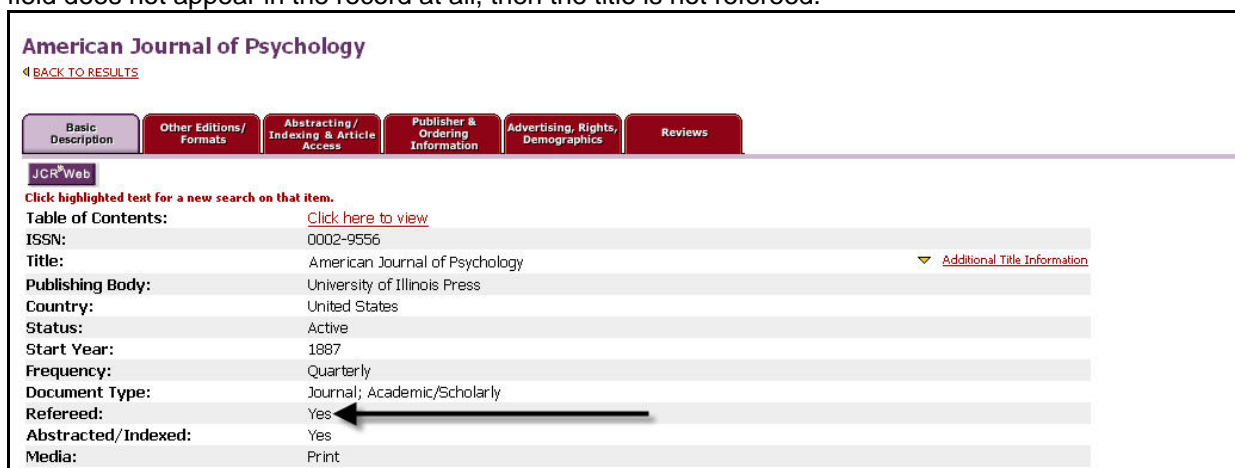
For determining whether articles from other databases are peer-reviewed, see the database, **Ulrich's Periodicals Directory**, from either the Other Resources menu or Alphabetical List from the FLITE Database Access page. In **Ulrich's Periodicals Directory**, type in the name of the magazine or journal and select Title (Exact) as the type of search.



Refereed status can be determined on the results page if the appropriate symbol is located next to the journal title. In this case, *The American Journal of Psychology* has been labeled refereed by **Ulrich's Periodicals Directory**.



Also, if the title is refereed, “**Refereed: Yes**” will appear in the middle of the record. If the “**Refereed**” field does not appear in the record at all, then the title is not refereed.



If you are still not sure whether a particular periodical is peer-reviewed or refereed, please check with a Reference Librarian for assistance.