

HOW TO REVIEW THE LITERATURE AND CONDUCT ETHICAL STUDIES

Most college libraries have a section for scholarly journals and magazines, or, in some cases, they mix the journals with books. Look at a map of library facilities or ask a librarian to identify this section. The most recent issues, which look like magazines, are often physically separate in a “current periodicals” section where they are temporarily available until the library receives all issues of a volume.

Libraries place scholarly journals from many fields together with popular, nonscholarly magazines. All are periodicals, or “serials” in the jargon of librarians. Thus, you will find popular magazines (e.g., *Time*, *Road and Track*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *The Atlantic*) next to journals for astronomy, chemistry, mathematics, literature, sociology, psychology, social work, and education. Libraries list journals in their catalog system by title and can provide a list of the periodicals to which they subscribe.

Scholarly journals are published as rarely as once a year or as frequently as weekly. Most appear four to six times a year. For example, *Social Science Quarterly*, like other journals with the word *quarterly* in their title, is published four times a year. To assist in locating articles, each journal issue has a date, volume number, and issue number. This information makes it easier to locate an article. Such information—along with details such as author, title, and page number—is called an article’s **citation** and is used in bibliographies or lists of works cited. The very first issue of a journal begins with volume 1, number 1. It continues increasing the numbers thereafter. Most journals follow a similar system, but enough exceptions exist that you need to pay close attention to citation information. For most journals, each volume includes one year of articles. If you see a journal issue with volume 52, it probably means that the journal has been in existence for 52 years. Most, but not all, journals begin their publishing cycle in January.

Citation Details of a scholarly publication’s location that helps people to find it quickly.

Abstract A short summary of a scholarly journal article that usually appears at its beginning; also a reference tool for locating journal articles.

Most journals number pages by volume, not by issue. The first issue of a volume usually begins with page 1, and page numbering continues throughout the entire volume. For example, the first page of volume 52, issue 4, may be page 547. Most journals have an index for each volume and a table of contents for each issue that lists the title, the author’s or authors’ names, and the page on which the article begins. Issues contain as few as one or two articles or as many as fifty. Most have eight to eighteen articles, which each may be five to fifty pages long. The articles often have **abstracts**, short summaries on the first page of the article or grouped together at the front of the issue.

Many libraries do not retain physical paper copies of older journals, but to save space and costs they keep only electronic or microfilm versions. Because each field may have hundreds of scholarly journals, with each costing the library \$100 to \$3,500 per year in subscription fees, only the large research libraries subscribe to most of them. You can also obtain a copy of an article from a distant library through an *interlibrary loan service*, a system by which libraries lend books or materials to other libraries. Few libraries allow people to check out recent issues of scholarly journals.

If you go to the library and locate the periodicals section, it is fun to wander down the aisles and skim what is on the shelves. You will see volumes containing many research reports. Each title of a scholarly journal has a call number like that of a regular library book. Libraries often arrange the journals alphabetically by title. However, journals sometimes change titles, creating confusion if they have been shelved under their original titles.

Scholarly journals contain articles on research in an academic field. Thus, most mathematics journals contain reports on new mathematical studies or proofs, literature journals contain commentary and literary criticism on works of literature, and sociology journals contain reports of sociological research. Some journals cover a very broad field (e.g., social science, education, public affairs) and contain reports from the entire field. Others specialize in a subfield (e.g., the family, criminology, early childhood education, or comparative politics).

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Citation Formats. An article's citation is the key to locating it. Suppose you want to read the study by Pampel on cultural taste, music, and smoking behavior. Its citation says the following: Pampel, Fred C. 2006. "Socioeconomic Distinction, Cultural Tastes, and Cigarette Smoking." *Social Science Quarterly*, 87(1):19–35. It tells you to go to an issue of the scholarly journal *Social Science Quarterly* published in 2006. The citation does not provide the month, but it gives the volume number (87), the issue as 1, and the page numbers (319–335).

Formats for citing literature vary in many ways. The most popular format in the text is the internal citation format of using an author's last name and date of publication in parentheses. A full citation appears in a separate bibliography or reference section. There are many styles for full citations of journal articles with books and other types of works each having a separate style. When citing articles, it is best to check with an instructor, journal, or other outlet for the required form. Almost all include the names of authors, article title, journal name, and volume and page numbers. Beyond these basic elements, there is great variety. Some include the authors' first names while others use initials only. Some include all authors; others give only the first one. Some include information on the issue or month of publication; others do not (see Figure 1).

Citation formats can be complex. Two major reference tools on the topic in social science are *Chicago Manual of Style*, which has nearly 80 pages on bibliographies and reference formats, and *American Psychological Association Publication Manual*, which devotes about 60 pages to the topic. In sociology, the *American Sociological Review* style, with two pages of style instructions, is widely followed.

Books. Books communicate many types of information, provoke thought, and entertain. The many types of books include picture books, textbooks, short story books, novels, popular fiction or non-fiction, religious books, and children's books. Our concern here is with those books containing reports of original research or collections of research articles. Libraries shelve these books and assign call

numbers to them, as they do with other types of books. You can find citation information on them (e.g., title, author, publisher) in the library's catalog system.

Distinguishing a book reporting on research from other books can be difficult. You are more likely to find such books in a college or university library. Some publishers, such as university presses, specialize in publishing research reports. Nevertheless, there is no guaranteed method for identifying one on research without reading it. Some types of research are more likely to appear in book form than others. For example, studies by anthropologists and historians are more likely to appear in book-length reports than are those of economists or psychologists. However, some anthropological and historical studies are reported in articles, and some economic and psychological studies appear as books. In education, social work, sociology, and political science, the results of long, complex studies may appear both in two or three articles and in book form. Studies that involve detailed clinical or ethnographic descriptions and complex theoretical or philosophical discussions usually appear as books. Finally, an author who wants to communicate to scholarly peers and to the educated public may write a book that bridges the scholarly, academic style and a popular nonfiction style. Locating original research articles in books can be difficult because no single source lists them.

Three types of books contain collections of articles or research reports. The first type, for teaching, called a *reader*, may include original research reports. Usually, articles on a topic from scholarly journals are gathered and edited to be easier for students to read and understand. The second type of collection gathers journal articles or may contain original research or theoretical essays on a specific topic. Some collections contain original research reports organized around a specialized topic in journals that are difficult to locate. The table of contents lists the titles and authors. Libraries shelve these collections with other books, and some library catalog systems include article or chapter titles. Finally, annual research books that are hybrids between scholarly journals and collections of articles contain reports on studies not found elsewhere. They

FIGURE 1 Different Reference Citations for a Journal Article

The oldest journal of sociology in the United States, *American Journal of Sociology*, reports on a study of virginity pledges by Peter Bearman and Hannah Bückner. It appeared on pages 859 to 912 of the January 2001 issue (number 4) of the journal, which begins counting issues in March. It was in volume 106, or the journal's 106th year. Here are ways to cite the article. Two very popular styles are those of American Sociological Review (ASR) and American Psychological Association (APA).

ASR STYLE

Bearman, Peter and Hannah Bückner. 2001. "Promising the Future: Virginity Pledges and First Intercourse." *American Journal of Sociology* 106:859–912.

APA STYLE

Bearman, P., and Bückner, H. (2001). Promising the future: Virginity pledges and first intercourse. *American Journal of Sociology* 106, 859–912.

OTHER STYLES

Bearman, P., and H. Bückner. "Promising the Future: Virginity Pledges and First Intercourse," *American Journal of Sociology* 106 (2001), 859–912.

Bearman, Peter and Hannah Bückner, 2001.
"Promising the future: Virginity pledges and first intercourse." *Am.J. of Sociol.* 106:859–912.

Bearman, P. and Bückner, H. (2001). "Promising the Future: Virginity Pledges and First Intercourse." *American Journal of Sociology* 106 (January): 859–912.

Bearman, Peter and Hannah Bückner. 2001.
"Promising the future: Virginity pledges and first intercourse." *American Journal of Sociology* 106 (4):859–912.

Bearman, P. and H. Bückner. (2001). "Promising the future: Virginity pledges and first intercourse." *American Journal of Sociology* 106, 859–912.

Peter Bearman and Hannah Bückner, "Promising the Future: Virginity Pledges and First Intercourse," *American Journal of Sociology* 106, no. 4 (2001): 859–912.

appear year after year with a volume number for each year. These volumes, such as the *Review of Research in Political Sociology* and *Comparative Social Research*, are shelved with books. Some annual books specialize in literature reviews (e.g., *Annual Review of Sociology* and *Annual Review of Anthropology*). No comprehensive list of these books is available as there is for scholarly journals. The only way to find out is by spending a lot of time in the library or asking a researcher who is already familiar with a topic area.

Citations or references to books are shorter than article citations. They include the author's name, book title, year and place of publication, and publisher's name.

Dissertations. All graduate students who receive the doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.) degree are required to complete a work of original research, called a *dissertation thesis*. The dissertation is bound and shelved in the library of the university that granted the degree. About half of all dissertations