

Anatomy of a scholarly article



Has your instructor specified that you include a scholarly or peer-reviewed article in a research project? Grab your X-ray glasses and learn how to recognize one!

Titles

The **journal's title** will be long and descriptive. (*Example: International Journal of American Linguistics*) The **article's title** also will be long because it summarizes the article. Technical terms may be included. (*Example: A Cognitive Model for the Representation and Acquisition of Verb Selectional Preferences*)

Authors

Authors (usually several of them) and their credentials will be included. Credentials either appear with the authors' names under the title or are provided in a footnote or endnote. Credentials establish the authors' **authority** — their qualifications and experience.

Introduction

The introduction describes the topic or issue the authors researched, including their

thesis and/or the goal of their research. The introduction may also discuss the relevance or importance of the research question.

Article text

The body of an article usually is presented in sections, including an introduction, a literature review, one or more sections describing and analyzing the argument, experiment, or study. Scientific research articles typically include these sections:

- A **literature review**, which is an overview of related research and findings.
- **Methods and results** of the experiment are described. Readers should be provided with enough information that they would be able to duplicate the basic elements of the study.
- A **discussion** of the research findings.
- Scholarly articles typically end with a **conclusion** that summarizes the findings.

These sections may or may not be labeled. Two or more sections may be combined. The text is typically highly technical, and assumes familiarity with the topic. Jargon, abbreviations, and technical terms related to the field are used without definition.

Charts, graphs, and equations

Scholarly articles often contain charts, graphs, equations, and statistical data related to the research. Pictures are rare unless they directly relate to the research being presented.

Conclusion

A scholarly article ends with a **conclusion** where the authors summarize the results of their research. They may also discuss how their findings relate to other scholarship or encourage other researchers to extend or follow up on their work.

References

Scholarly articles contain **references** to publications by other authors. Look for references scattered throughout the text of the article, as footnotes at the bottom of the page, or as endnotes at the end of the article.

Most scholarly articles provide **references** at the end. Each reference listed corresponds to one of the citations provided in the body of the paper. Use these references to find additional scholarly articles and books about your topic. To see if a library database includes a specific journal, click the **Journal Finder** tab on the Library's home page. Select **Title equals** from the pull-down menu before you press **Search**.

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