Is my source scholarly*?

Step 1: Source
Did you find this article in a library database?
- Yes
  - Is the journal peer-reviewed? (See criteria on other side for help.)
    - Yes
      - Most likely scholarly
    - No
      - Not scholarly
    - Move to Step 2: Author(s)
- No
  - Did you find this article in Google Scholar?
    - Yes
      - Most likely scholarly
    - No
      - Most likely not scholarly
      - Move to Step 2: Author(s)

Step 2: Author(s)
Are the author(s)’ credentials provided?
- Yes
  - Are the authors affiliated with a university or other research institute?
    - Yes
      - Most likely scholarly
    - No
      - Most likely not scholarly
      - Move to Step 3: Content
- No
  - Move to Step 3: Content

Step 3: Content
Does the article attempt to persuade or bias the reader?
- Yes
  - Does the article have a works cited or bibliography?
    - Yes
      - Is the topic treated objectively and is the information well-supported?
        - Yes
          - Most likely scholarly
        - No
          - Not scholarly
          - Move to Step 2: Author(s)
    - No
      - Is the article longer than ~10 pages?
        - Yes
          - Most likely scholarly
        - No
          - Not scholarly
          - Move to Step 2: Author(s)

If your source meets the criteria in Steps 1 - 3 it is Most likely scholarly

More questions? Talk to your instructor or Ask a Librarian*!

*www.library.illinois.edu/askus
Select the best information source

Information is available via a wide variety of sources. Use the guidelines below to determine if a particular source is likely to meet your information needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Best For</th>
<th>Intended Audience</th>
<th>Watch for/Consider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Newspapers**          | • Daily local, national, and international news, events, and editorial coverage  
                          | • Statistics and photojournalism  
                          | • Record of events and quotes from experts, officials, and witnesses | • General audience  
|                         |                                                                         |                                                           | • Authors usually not experts  
                          |                                                                         |                                                           | • If a story is breaking, corrections to initial report likely  
                          |                                                                         |                                                           | • Editorial bias of a publication  
| **Popular magazines**   | • Current information  
                          | • Short, easy to understand articles (including analysis, interviews, opinions, etc.)  
                          | • Photographs and illustrations | • General audience, or those with a specific, recreational interest (e.g. sports, fashion, science, etc.)  
|                         |                                                                         |                                                           | • Authors usually not experts  
                          |                                                                         |                                                           | • Sources not always cited  
                          |                                                                         |                                                           | • Editorial bias of a publication  
| **Professional/Trade Publications** | • Current information  
                          | • Specialized articles related to a particular discipline or profession (including context and analysis) | • Professional organizations or professionals/scholars with similar interests | • Articles vary between short and easy to lengthy and highly specific  
                          |                                                                         |                                                           | • Sources not always cited  
|                         |                                                                         |                                                           | • Has characteristics in common with both popular magazines and scholarly journals  
| **Scholarly/Academic Journals** | • In-depth research on a topic  
                          | • Focused, peer-reviewed articles written by experts  
                          | • Data, statistics, charts, and graphs  
                          | • Bibliographies of other sources  
                          | • Scholars, researchers, professionals, and university students in particular field | • Terminology and/or data may be difficult for novices to understand  
| **Books**               | • Comprehensive overview of topic  
                          | • Background and historical context  
                          | • Bibliographies of other sources | • Varies (general audience through scholars)  
|                         |                                                                         |                                                           | • Dated information  
                          |                                                                         |                                                           | • Bias (dependent on author, publisher, etc.)  
| **Websites**            | • News  
                          | • Government information  
                          | • Company information  
                          | • Alternate points of view | • General audience | • Credibility and accuracy cannot always be assured  
                          |                                                                         |                                                           | • Bias (dependent on author, publisher, etc.)  
                          |                                                                         |                                                           | • Sources not always cited |