

What is a Journal Article?

For your assignment, you've been asked to look for journal articles. But what exactly is a journal article?

Journal articles are the main way that academics talk to other academics about their research. Your instructors are often not only teachers, but also researchers who write these journal articles. Journal articles are about a very specific topic and are written by experts for other experts.

You can have primary journal articles and secondary journal articles. Primary journal articles are a first-hand account of research that researchers have conducted. In contrast, secondary articles review the results from many primary articles and are useful for better understanding your topic. Keep in mind that the data and results of these studies have been interpreted by another author, however, which can lead to mistakes.

The most reliable source of high-quality information is journal articles that have been peer-reviewed. Peer review is a process that many articles undergo prior to publication. An author sends the paper to a journal editor, who then sends it out to other experts in the field. Feedback from these experts is then used to improve the paper, as well as to determine if it's fit for publication.

Keep in mind that not all journals peer-review their articles. You can check whether a journal peer reviews its articles through Ulrich's.

By including peer-reviewed journal articles in your assignment, you'll be able to support your research with concrete, high-quality evidence.