# **Books, Journals, Magazines, Grey Literature & More**

## Books and eBooks

From an information perspective, print and ebooks are the same. The main difference between them is access. Print books are physical items, whereas ebooks are digital files that can be accessed from a variety of devices.

Book publication can take a long time. First, the author researches the topic, then they write a draft. The unpublished manuscript is then sent to a publisher to be edited, rewritten, and finally ... published.

This can be a lengthy process and explains why even if a book is released less than a year ago, it likely doesn’t contain up-to-the minute information.

### Why use books/ebooks?

Books provide overviews, background, history and introductions as well as in-depth examinations of topics. They are useful when you are looking for in-depth information on a topic, or background overview of a subject area.

## Journal Articles

When researching a topic for your academic work, you may be asked to find “scholarly” / “academic” / “research” / “peer reviewed” journal articles.

These terms are sometimes used interchangeably, but not all articles are peer reviewed, and there are slight differences between these categories.

The main thing to note is that all of these types of articles are found in journals (as opposed to magazines, newspapers, or books).

Journals can be found through your library’s databases or sometimes on the web (if the journal is “open access” - meaning there is no pay wall before you read the articles).

### Peer Reviewed Articles:

Some journals (categorized as “peer reviewed journals”) specifically publish articles that have been peer reviewed. In order for an article to be published in a peer reviewed journal, it has to go through a formal submission process which includes a peer review stage where experts ensure the accuracy, originality, significance, and other characteristics of the research before it is accepted for publication. These articles are highly regarded because the findings and results have been reviewed by experts in the field. Therefore, peer reviewed articles are viewed as credible and authoritative.

### Research Articles:

In a research article a researcher, or group of researchers, present findings of their research. These articles can also be considered academic and scholarly, and they may be peer-reviewed.

### Academic / Scholarly Articles:

The terms academic and scholarly journal articles are used interchangeably, and can also sometimes be peer reviewed research articles, but can also be opinion pieces or book reviews if they are published in peer reviewed journals. When you search for a journal article, make sure to look at the title and content. If your instructor wants you to find a full-length research article, you don’t want to choose an opinion piece or book review.

Download the below documents to learn more about Journal Articles or watch the [Scholarly Sources video](https://youtu.be/rv2TnW6CF0s):

* [What's the Difference?](https://tlp-lpa.ca/ld.php?content_id=36104901)
* [How to Identify a Scholarly Article](https://tlp-lpa.ca/ld.php?content_id=34913632)

## Trade Magazines

Trade magazines or trade journals **publish** articles aimed at people working in a particular field. The content focuses on information about working in the profession, trends, and news related to that field or trade, rather than academic research.

Consider this type of source to be more practical than the more theoretical and philosophical academic journals.

Examples of trade magazines / journals include:

* [Broadcast Dialogue](http://broadcastdialogue.com/)
* [Design Develop Construct Journal](http://www.ddcjournal.com/)

## Popular Magazines

Popular magazines publish articles that typically focus on information from pop culture. Articles are usually short, with a casual tone, and often have images embedded throughout.

Examples of popular magazines include:

* [Chatelaine](http://www.chatelaine.com/)
* [Maclean's](http://www.macleans.ca/)
* [Style at Home](http://www.styleathome.com/)

In comparison, scholarly articles are long, black and white, and have statistical tables and graphs included as part of the research. Academic papers also have a long list of references available at the end of the paper.

While popular magazine articles are informative, and often mention academic research, they may not be the best choice to include as part of academic research. However, you may be able to track down the original study that the popular article mentions and use that as one of your sources.

Click here to watch a video about [Scholarly vs Popular Articles](https://youtu.be/DZz2tuENZEc) to learn more.

## Open Access Journals

Open access journals are online academic publications, made available to readers without subscription fees, free of charge. Traditional publishers (e.g. [Sage](http://sgo.sagepub.com/), [Oxford University Press](http://www.oxfordjournals.org/en/our-journals/index.html)) also make some of their content available through open access.

Examples of open access journals:

* [The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning](http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/index)
* [Age and Ageing](http://ageing.oxfordjournals.org/)

Open access articles can be found through Google, Google Scholar, or any other search engine, as well as through the college library.

When using open access literature for academic work, make sure to [evaluate the content critically](http://tlp-lpa.ca/research/evaluate-for-quality).

## Grey Literature

Grey literature refers to materials published non-commercially. These materials can be made available by the government, academia, non-for-profit, business and trade organizations, in print and digital formats. Examples of grey literature include:

* Conference proceedings
* Reports (e.g. statistical, technical, committee reports)
* White papers
* Flyers
* Newsletters
* Fact sheets
* Theses and dissertations
* Patents
* Unpublished materials

### Why use grey literature?

It is sometimes more current than published research, and it is a great way to supplement your research, providing your project with a full picture viewpoint. You can find grey literature online, by searching Google (or another search engine), and/or Google Scholar.

Click here to watch a video about [Grey Literature for Health Sciences](https://youtu.be/8yUnBcFAn7I) to learn more.

## Research Studies

There are different types of research studies that examine information in different ways. The different types of studies fall into two categories:

* **Filtered information:** This type of study has been evaluated for quality by someone not involved with the original research and may make recommendations for clinical practice.
* **Unfiltered information:** This type of study is original research.

Below are some of the most common types of research studies in each category; keep in mind this is not an exhaustive list. Most of the study types below are typically published in scholarly journals, but some are also published in non-journal databases such as the Cochrane Library.

### Filtered Information

* Meta-analyses: A meta-analysis involves combining the results of multiple studies using statistical methods. It is often, but not always, part of a systematic review.
* **Systematic Reviews:** A systematic review is a review of the evidence on a specific research question that uses a systematic methodology. It is similar to a literature review, but it goes more in-depth and aims to consider all the existing literature on a research question. It should address a specific, answerable question. It may or may not include a meta-analysis.
* **Scoping Reviews:** A scoping review is similar to a systematic review, but it aims to address broader and often exploratory research questions. Scoping reviews are often conducted to identify gaps in the literature.

### Unfiltered Information

* **Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs):** A randomized controlled trial is an experiment comparing two or more interventions. Participants must be randomly assigned to the intervention groups, one of which is the control group, which does not receive an active intervention. If neither the participants nor the researchers know which group each participant is assigned to, this is called a “double-blind” RCT; this is considered the gold standard.
* **Cohort Studies:** A cohort study follows one or more groups of research participants, known as cohorts, over time. These studies can take months, years, or decades to complete. The participants in each cohort are similar to each other in some way (e.g., age, occupation, socioeconomic status). At various points in time, the researchers will measure the impact of an external factor. This type of study is observational, unlike a randomized controlled trial, where the researchers control the intervention. Cohort studies are often used to identify risk factors for diseases.
* **Case-Control Studies:** A case-control study compares a group of people who have a disease (the cases) with a similar group of people who do not have the disease (the controls). The researchers will look for historical factors to help explain why the cases have the disease. This type of study is especially useful when studying rare diseases since it allows researchers to start by identifying affected individuals and then matching them with controls.

## Documents From Associations and Regulatory Colleges

Many important documents are produced by associations and regulatory colleges, such as the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) and the Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario (RNAO). These documents are considered grey literature. They are not peer-reviewed, but they have been produced by experts in the field and are considered essential forms of knowledge. They are typically freely available on the organization’s website.

Examples of documents from associations and regulatory colleges:

* [CNO Standards & Guidelines](https://www.cno.org/en/learn-about-standards-guidelines/standards-and-guidelines/)
* [RNAO Best Practice Guidelines](https://rnao.ca/bpg)

## Drug information

While scholarly journal articles may contain information about specific drugs, they typically don’t include extensive details. Instead, detailed drug information is available in specialized databases, where you can search for a drug and find information about things like:

* Indications and Clinical Use
* Contraindications
* Warnings and Precautions
* Drug Interactions
* Dosage and Administration
* Action and Clinical Pharmacology
* Storage and Stability

### An example of a drug information page:

