

## **Reading Scholarly Articles**

What exactly are scholarly articles, and how should you go about reading them? Scholarly articles are written by professors, researchers, and scholars in order to share their research and ideas with others. These articles are published in academic journals.

Also called “peer reviewed articles” or “academic articles”, they tend to be dense and full of jargon, which can make them intimidating. Here are some strategies for approaching these resources.

Before you start reading you’ll see information about the article including the title, the journal name journal the article was published in, when it was published, and who wrote it. This can give you a sense of what discipline this paper was written in and offer information for your citation.

Many scholarly articles will have an Abstract, Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, Results, Discussion, and Conclusion. All of these sections serve a unique purpose.

The Abstract is a short summary of the entire article. It’s a great way to get a sense of whether the article is relevant to your research question.

The introduction explains why they conducted this study and why their research is important.

Part of the paper discusses other literature in the field. This may be in the introduction or have its own section. It is helpful to see how this research fits into the scholarly conversation as well as where to look for additional studies and papers about your topic.

The methods section describes exactly how the research was conducted - did they do interviews? Collect surveys? Conduct a scientific experiment? The results section includes data, statistics, and charts about their methods. It’s good to have a sense of the methods and results; however, you don’t have to spend much time here. The most important information from these sections will be explained in the discussion.

The discussion explains the implications of the results, it will tell you what it all means. It will also summarize the important things from other sections,so it’s a great place to spend a lot of time reading closely.

The conclusion is a nice summary and can be another helpful place to get an overview of the research.

Finally, the references list shows you all of the information the author cites in their paper and also serves as a list to look through for additional research related to your topic.

When starting your research, focus on the abstract, introduction/literature review, and the discussion. Take a look at the rest of it, but avoid getting overwhelmed by the details of the other sections. Remember to check the references for another source that looks interesting.

If you have any questions please feel free to click the 'Ask us" button at the top right hand corner of our website to contact a librarian by livechat, text, phone, or email. If you're on campus, drop in help is available on the first floor of Lied Library. You can also check out our other videos for more quick and easy help.