

Glendale College Library Information Competency Workshops Improving Library Research

Keys to Identifying Scholarly/Peer Reviewed/Refereed Journals in Online Databases:

1. Use a database which includes only scholarly journals (e.g., JSTOR) or has a limiter for peer reviewed and/or scholarly journals (e.g., ProQuest):
2. Look for clues in the database item record or in the article itself:
 - Many databases now identify scholarly and/or peer-reviewed articles in the search results.
 - Are the author's credentials listed?
 - Is the publisher of the document an association? (Examples: American Psychological Association, Archaeological Institute of America, etc.)
 - How long is the article (pages? word count?) **Hint:** Scholarly journal articles tend to be lengthy.
 - Is the article written with an academic purpose for an academic audience?
 - What does the abstract tell you? Does the article report original research? Does the author use scholarly language (technical), or everyday language?
3. Use the *UlrichsWeb* database to find a detailed, analytical description of any periodical.
4. Still not sure? Consult with a librarian or your course instructor.

A **scholarly journal** is authored by academics for a mainly academic audience. It is published by a recognized society with academic goals and missions. The journal must be academic in focus with the purpose of reporting research, supporting research needs, and/or advancing one's knowledge on a topic or theory.

A **peer reviewed journal** contains articles that go through an editorial process of review and approval by the author's peers (people who are experts in the same subject area).

Note: Most, but not all **scholarly journals** are **peer-reviewed**. Likewise, most but not all **peer-reviewed** journals are scholarly.

This information is adapted from:

"Scholarly Journals, Trade Publications, and Popular Magazines." *ProQuest*, 15 Jan.2004. Web. 26 Jul. 2011

<<http://training.proquest.com/trc/training/en/peervsscholarly.pdf>>

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Criteria for Evaluating Search Results

When evaluating search results, consider each source based on these criteria:

- **Relevance** – Is the source focused on your topic? Is it likely to offer you new information, to corroborate what you found elsewhere, or answers to some of your questions?
- **Currency** – When was the source originally published? Do you need only the most recent information or historical/background information?
- **Audience** – Who is the target audience for this source? For whom is it intended?
- **Authority** – What expertise does the author have? Academic degrees? Professional affiliations? Do they discuss their methodology or procedures for their research? Do they cite their sources of information?

Exercise 1: Evaluating Search Results

- A. Sample research topic to use with **Figure 1**: *Does American democracy lead to all Americans becoming wealthier?*
1. Which of the four books below would be most useful in answering your research question?
 2. Of the book/s you chose in #1, which has the most current information (which is most timely)?

Figure 1 – Results List from the Library Online Catalog


















The screenshot displays a search results page with four entries, each preceded by a checkbox and a book icon. The entries are:

- 1 **Wealth and our commonwealth : why America should tax accumulated fortunes / William H. Gates, Sr., and Chuck Collins.**
Gates, William H.
2002
336.276 G259w
✓ available, Books - Upper Level
- 2 **Raw deal : how myths and misinformation about deficits, inflation, and wealth impoverish America / Ellen Frank.**
Frank, Ellen.
2004
330.973 F828r
✓ available, Books - Upper Level
- 3 **Ruling America : a history of wealth and power in a democracy / edited by Steve Fraser & Gary Gerstle.**
2005
305.520973 R935
✓ available, Books - Upper Level
- 4 **Wall Street [electronic resource] : America's dream palace / Steve Fraser.**
Fraser, Steve, 1945-
2008
✓ available, Electronic Books

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- B. Sample research topic for Figure 2: Write an essay in which you take a position against or in support of the California Dream Act.

Figure 2 – Results list from a ProQuest database search

	Rep. Brian Bilbray Calls California Dream Act a Nightmare for California Taxpayers: Rep. Brian P. Bilbray (R-CA) News Release	 Preview
	<i>Congressional Documents and Publications</i> . (2011).	
	 Citation  Full text	
	California Could Make The Dream Act A Reality	 Preview
	Anonymous. Morning Edition (Jun 9, 2011) ...aid. A bill called the California Dream Act is working its way through the ...Brown is on record supporting the California Dream Act. Even with the	
	 Citation  Full text	
	Undocumented Students' Access to College: The American Dream Denied	 Preview
	Chavez, Maria Lucia; Soriano, Mayra; Oliverez, Paz. <i>Latino Studies</i> 5. 2 (Summer 2007): 254-263. ...vetoed Senate Bill 160, the California Dream Act. Senate Bill 160, authored ...such as the CAL Grant. The California Dream Act was reintroduced in March 2007 ...aid programs, the 2007 California Dream Act aims to expand the AB 540 high	
	 Citation/Abstract  Full text  Full text - PDF (82 KB)	
	THE AMERICAN DREAM AND IMMIGRANT STUDENTS	 Preview
	Pang, Valerie Ooka; Stratton, Tamiko; Park, Cynthia D; Madueño, Marcelina; Atlas, Miriam; et al. <i>Race, Gender & Class</i> 17. 1/2 (2010): 180-193. ...similar new versions of the California DREAM Act which have both been passed by	
	References (31)  Citation/Abstract  Full text	

1. Which of the articles in Figure 2 do you think might be useful as a source for this topic?
2. Which of the articles in Figure 2 are published in scholarly journals? How can you determine this?