

Instant Workshops

Identifying Peer-Reviewed Content

This workshop explains what peer review is and how you can identify whether an article is peer-reviewed.

Transcript

Identifying peer-reviewed content. You might have heard the term “peer review” before in your classes, or maybe as part of the scholarly publishing process. But what is peer review, and why does it matter?

Peer review, also sometimes called refereeing, is a process by which, before publication, a journal article is sent out to other scholars in the field, who are the author’s peers. These scholars can recommend that the prospective journal article be rejected, or that revisions are required prior to publication.

This process is usually only part of scholarly publishing, as opposed to popular publications like magazines or newspapers. It’s not a perfect process, but it is an important part of the quality control process of scholarly publishing.

But how can you tell if something is peer-reviewed or not? Sometimes you will see an indication in the journal article itself, whether via an icon or perhaps in an Acknowledgements or Additional Information section.

Other times you may need to go to the journal’s website to have more detail. For example, this information can sometimes be found in an About the Journal page, or maybe in an editorial policy or a submission guideline.

Make sure to read these sections carefully to understand what content is being peer-reviewed. Often you will find that journals do not peer-review certain sections, such as letters to the editor, so those sections would not be considered peer-reviewed.

In addition to the journal website, some databases allow you to limit your search to articles that are peer-reviewed, whether as part of the search bar, or as a filter on the results page.

If you have any questions about the peer review process, we recommend that you contact your institution’s library.

Instructions

To identify whether an article is peer-reviewed*

1. Check the journal article itself. Is there an indication at the top about peer review? Is there mention of peer review in an Acknowledgements or Additional Information section?
2. Check the journal website – perhaps in the About, Editorial Policies, or Instructions to the Author sections. Do these mention a peer-review process?
 1. If so, does the journal specify which sections are or are not peer-reviewed?
3. Check the database in which you are searching. Does it allow you to limit your search to peer-reviewed content?

*These instructions may vary depending on the specific journal or database you're looking at

Review

Task for Learning

Identify whether a particular article is peer-reviewed.

Review Question

How can you identify whether an article is peer-reviewed?

- a) Look at the journal's editorial policies
- b) Check that it is published in a journal
- c) Determine the qualifications of the author
- d) Check whether your library has access to the article through its subscriptions

The correct answer is on the next page.

Review Question Answer

The correct answer is a) Look at the journal's editorial policies.