

Finding Scholarly, Peer-Reviewed Articles

1. You need to find two scholarly, peer-reviewed articles, but what are they? Where are they?
2. Peer-reviewed articles are written by experts and reviewed by other experts — their peers — before they are published. Another name you'll hear for peer-reviewed articles is “refereed” articles.
3. Why are peer-reviewed articles important for your research paper? They've been through a kind of quality control that you won't find in popular magazines and newspapers. This ensures the facts they present are based on solid, scientific studies, not opinions.
4. You'll find peer-reviewed articles in academic journals. Journals are magazines for scholars in a specialized field of study, like psychology, mathematics or political science.
5. At SJSU, many of these academic journal articles are available online in one of the university's over 300 databases. You can access these databases in the library or at home.
6. But where to start? How do you know which database will have the research you need? Begin at the library's homepage, library.sjsu.edu and click on the Articles and Databases link.
7. On this page, you can access any database the university offers. If you know the name of the database you want, use the Browse by Title option.
8. But say you're taking an American Studies class and want to find databases only for that subject. For that, look under Browse by Subject Area and click on the American Studies link.
9. On the American Studies page, you'll find a list of the best databases for this program. For many programs, you'll also find a cross search link. Cross search lets you search for articles in several databases at one time.
10. On the right is information on how to contact the subject specialist librarian for this department. For every program offered at SJSU, there is a librarian available to help you with your research. You can call, e-mail or set up an appointment for one-on-one help with your assignment.
11. The librarians have also created Research Guides (or LibGuides) for every program. Here you'll find research tips, links to useful websites, and more—all of it specific to your subject area.
12. Now, let's go back a page and look at how to search for articles in a database. We'll use Academic Search Premier.

13. Let's find some articles on ethics in advertising. To do this, enter "ethics" in the first search box and "advertising" in the second search box. Because you want peer-reviewed articles, you will limit your search in one more way. Halfway down the page you'll see a checkbox next to the phrase Scholarly (Peer-Reviewed) Journals. Click this box and the articles you retrieve are restricted to peer-reviewed. Now click the Search button at the top of the page.
14. To get the full text of an article, click on the link below the article title marked "PDF Full Text." That's your article! A PDF file gives you the whole article as it appeared in the journal.
15. Some articles will have a link below called HTML Full Text. This also provides the full text of the article. The only differences are the text will appear less formatted than in a PDF and there will be no page numbers.
16. But take a look at this article above. It doesn't have a PDF or HTML Full Text link. Instead, there's an orange GetText button. When you see the GetText button, you'll know that the full text of the article is not available in the database you're using. But it may be available in another SJSU database and the GetText button can take you there.
17. As you can see, the article is available in another university database; clicking on that link will take you to it. Sometimes when you click on the GetText button, all you will see is the phrase "May be available in the SJSU Library Catalog." This means that SJSU doesn't have a copy of that article online, but you might be able to find it in our collection of print journals in the Lower Level of the library.
18. Occasionally, your article won't be available at the King Library, online or in print. When this happens, GetText will give you one of two choices: Get It Now or Interlibrary Services. Get It Now will usually e-mail your article to you within one hour, but it can take as long as 8 hours. Interlibrary Services can take from 2 to 3 days or — depending on the time of semester — up to 2 weeks. So be sure you have plenty of time if you choose this option.
19. So, to recap: Peer-review = quality control. Peer-reviewed articles are available from SJSU's online databases. PDF Full Text, HTML Full Text or the orange GetText button will bring you to the complete article, if it's available.
20. Finding peer-reviewed articles is challenging, but SJSU's databases make it easier. Happy researching!