

Academic vs Popular

Academic Sources

- The author's credentials are clear, and the author is usually an experience scholar (i.e, professor, someone affiliated with a university).
- Sources are cited in a bibliography and/or in footnotes.
- The source is published by a scholarly/academic press.
- The source is peer-reviewed.
- Includes mostly books and scholarly journals.

Popular Sources

- The author may not be named or have expertise in a particular field.
- Sources are rarely (if ever) included.
- The source's publisher is unknown or a popular multidisciplinary press.
- The source is not peer-reviewed or is reviewed by a non-specialist editor.
- Includes websites, magazines, and newspapers.

How to tell if a source is academic in a library database:

- Apply a 'peer-reviewed' filter.
- Review the author(s) and publisher.
- Check for citations.
- When in doubt, come to the Writing Center!