

Is Your **Book** Scholarly?

TIPS:

- To evaluate whether a book is scholarly, give it the **APPLE** test: **A**uthor, **P**urpose, **P**ublisher, **L**anguage, **E**vidence. When in doubt, always ask for your professor's opinion.
- *Peer review*, one of the defining characteristics of scholarly *journal article* publication (see [Is Your Journal Scholarly?](#)) may also be used by scholarly presses for book manuscripts. However, a book's content often does not indicate whether or not it has been peer reviewed prior to its publication.
- Check out [Is Your Journal Scholarly?](#) and [Is your Website Credible?](#)

The APPLE Test	Scholarly	→	→	Least Scholarly/ Popular Culture
AUTHOR'S AUTHORITY	Holds advanced degree in the subject covered by the book or in a very closely related field	Trained investigative reporter writing about his/her investigation	Professional in the field writing about experiences in his/her own profession	Pundits and other opinion makers writing about their opinions
PURPOSE	Discusses and reflects on original empirical research Consider currency (how old the book is). In some fields such as science or medicine, currency is key	Provides an in-depth examination of current events, e.g. <i>Chain Of Command</i> <i>The Road From 9/11 To Abu Ghraib</i> by Seymour Hersh	Discusses personal or professional experiences, e.g. Michael Connelly's book about his life as a crime reporter Profiles individuals in a non-scholarly way, e.g. the biography <i>Flags of Our Fathers</i>	Argues personal political opinions, e.g. books by Ann Coulter or Al Franken
PUBLISHER	A press that uses a double blind peer-review process before publication	University presses in general (e.g. Oxford, Kansas, or Cambridge) or other scholarly publishers (Sage or Routledge) Professional organizations US government		Popular publishers (e.g. Viking or Doubleday)
LANGUAGE	Uses the terminology of the discipline to discuss research. Targeted to an audience of scholars		Uses language common to the general public	Uses inflammatory language to arouse bias and prejudice in the reader, e.g. <i>Assault on Weapons: The Campaign to Eliminate Your Guns</i>
EVIDENCE	Original data collection and analysis/primary sources cited in footnotes and bibliographies	Interviews with persons close to event or research area cited within the text of the book Sources may be indicated by phrases such as, "one source close to the Vice President reported" Secondary sources cited in footnotes and bibliographies	Describes personal experience, e.g. <i>Nickel and Dimed</i> by Barbara Ehrenreich Selected anecdotes from peoples' lives are described	Personal opinions and opinions of others form the basis of conclusions, e.g. <i>The Global Warming / Climate Change Hoax: Fraud, Lies, Deception & Threats are the Tools of the Global Warming / Climate Change Hoax Folks</i>