Journal Articles, Secondary Sources and Peer Review

What is a journal article?

A journal is a type of periodical. Periodicals are publications that are provided on a regular basis (ie: annually, quarterly, weekly, and daily).

There are two major types of periodical publications: scholarly and popular. It is important to be aware of the differences between them before you search for articles in databases. Academic journals include scholarly articles by researchers. Newspapers and magazines are popular press titles.

How to find journal articles on your topic:

The library catalogue cannot be used to find articles on your research topic. Instead, you need to search databases. Not all databases are the same:

- some are full text: articles can be read online and printed, emailed, or saved.
- some contain a mix of citations and full text.
- some contain only citations.

- When the full text of your article is not linked in the database, click on [Get It! ualberta]

Secondary Sources:

In the discipline of History, journal articles are secondary sources. They are analyses and discussions of historical events and concepts written by researchers from differing perspectives. Each article contributes to the ongoing discussion within the discipline.

Useful tip: Secondary sources will include any Primary Sources that the author consulted in their Bibliographies / References / Lists of Works Cited.

Peer Review:

Many scholarly journal articles are subject to peer review.

Before they are published, articles that are peer reviewed or refereed are read and critiqued by other historians.

Search in Ulrich's database to find out whether a journal is peer reviewed.