WHY DO WE CARE ABOUT PEER-REVIEWED RESEARCH
The heart of academic writing is the peer-reviewed article. What is peer-reviewed? It’s the process by which articles are edited, fact checked, and reviewed by fellow experts within the field. This is not an easy process. An article can often take months to get through peer-review before it can even be considered for publication in an scholarly journal.

Your job as a researcher is to understand how your topic is discussed among scholars in the field of study. This is the "joining the conversation" for which part one of Essay 3 prepared you. Scholarly academic articles offer a powerful way for you to enter into that conversation.

WHO WROTE IT?
Can you easily identify the author(s) of the article? Do you have reason to believe they know a lot about this topic? Why? Can you find their credentials?

WHO READS IT?
What is the intended audience for this article? Does the language, tone, and content suggest an informed audience? Academic, scholarly writing is usually written for the informed audience, thus it contains jargon, evidence, and analysis specific to that field. This can often mean it’s hard to read!

WHERE IS THE ARTICLE PUBLISHED?
Most peer-reviewed articles are published in academic journals, which can exist both in print and online. These journals often have a group of editors who are committed to making sure only the best is published in their journal. Can you locate the editor(s) and their credentials? What about publication guidelines for submitting articles to the journal?

WHY WAS IT WRITTEN?
What is the purpose for this journal and the article written? Was it written to make money and sell many copies? Or does it advance knowledge?

OTHER INDICATORS
Does the article contain an abstract? (summary of the article)
Does the article contain a full Works Cited page?
Is the article lengthy (more than 5 pages)?
Are the images/graphs/figures there to enhance the content or just for show?

BEST WAY TO FIND PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES?
Use a library database like Academic Search Complete and limit your search results to "Scholarly (Peer-Reviewed) Journals."