

TYPES OF LITERATURE

Literature types range from the highly technical and dry to the entertaining to the absurd.

Question: Why does such a wide range of literature types exist? Examples?

Primary literature

Research articles, journal articles

Found in scientific journals

Represent the experimenter's original research and interpretations of results.

The first reporting of the results.

Likely the only place to find the original data.

Written by the scientist who performed the experiments.

Question: Have you ever read a primary literature article? What were your impressions?

Formatting/structure?

Dry or "with flair"?

Factual or speculative?

Some words about the **format** of the primary literature.

Question: If the primary literature represents the initial reporting of the results, how is the accuracy/appropriateness of the science ensured?

One problem: Without searchable databases, the primary literature might prove to be elusive to access.

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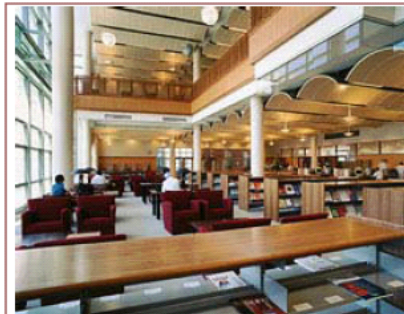
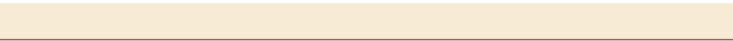
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The library at the Cleveland Clinic, an OhioLINK member. OhioLINK is a consortium of the libraries of 84 Ohio colleges and universities, and the State

New at OhioLINK:
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 (January 08, 2007)

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Secondary literature

Represents the synthesis of information taken from the *primary literature*.

Question: Who writes the secondary literature?

Review articles

Articles that describe the state of knowledge of a particular subject.

Sometimes lengthy, but not always (Mini-review)

Collection of the most important information, often from the best examples of the primary literature.

Extensive bibliography - is this useful?

When might you be interested in reading a review article?

How is scientific quality controlled?

Textbooks

Like a review article, textbooks bring together a high volume of information from the *primary literature*.

Question: In what style are textbooks written?

Question: How does that style differ from that of the primary literature?

Textbooks mean big business.

Question: What features do you look for in a good textbook?

These will be the same features that publishers take into account when making decisions about which books to publish and sell.

Try to find examples of these factors in your textbooks.

Semi-technical literature

Again, represents a synthesis/interpretation of the *primary literature*.

Easier to read “science for the interested person”.



Other examples?

Examples are also found in other forms of media besides print. (TV)

Semi-technical literature is **written with flair** more often than not.

[Sight Unseen](#); April 2001; by Neal Singer; 1 Page(s)

Adaptive optics could improve LASIK and impart superhuman vision

[Full of Croc?](#); April 2001; by Sarah Simpson; 1 Page(s)

A zealous crocodile wrestler goes to the mat for animals

[Hole in the Middle](#); April 2001; by George Musser; 2 Page(s)

Not too big, not too small, a new class of black hole emerges

Although semi-technical literature is easier to read, often more enjoyable to read, contains descriptive and colorful figures, the raw data is rarely present.

Non-technical literature

Brief accounts of scientific findings aimed at the average citizen.

Newspaper articles and news magazines

Television news

Limited exposure time (seconds to minutes)

Written and presented to **stimulate** the public

Pod-casts

Microbe WORLD BETA

Discover Unseen Life on Earth

search

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Antiviral surgical hand gels

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WHAT'S NEW

Light of the Sea
Moselio Schaechter, former president of the American Society for Microbiology and author of the Microbe textbook has written a [new article](#) for MicrobeWorld on bioluminescent organisms in the sea. The article is located in ASM Articles under the "In the News" tab. For other interesting topics, visit Schaechter's blog called "Small Things Considered."

USM team aims to stop staph
01/10/2007
In the epic battle between...

Glad Cows (video)
01/10/2007
In collaboration with the United...

Trouble ahead in TB's birthplace?
01/10/2007
A global killer's origins may...

No raw data and often written/communicated by a non-expert in the field.

Question: So what is the benefit of non-technical reports?

What about the WWW?

Keep in mind...

Who/what is the information source?

What do they have to gain with your readership?

What group(s) support the website?

Has the information been peer-reviewed?

Is contact information provided?