Welcome to the Mundt Library at Dakota State University. We are here to help you with all of your information needs whether it be research for a class or personal interest in a topic. If you have any questions, feel free to ask a librarian.

In this video you will learn the characteristics of a peer reviewed article and discover its importance when conducting research. The learning objectives that will be addressed include: understanding the process by which an article is accepted to a peer reviewed journal, understanding how the authority of an article is affected by knowing it is peer reviewed, and developing strategies to discover whether a journal is peer reviewed.

You are taking a course and are given the following assignment. In 5-7 pages, prepare an essay looking at a controversial topic related to your major. Any opinions must be backed by research from peer reviewed articles. You are ready to start your research but you wonder, what is a peer reviewed article.

A peer reviewed or refereed article is one which goes through a specific process in order to be published. Here is an example to illustrate the peer review process. Fred is a teacher at a high school. He has written a paper describing how after integrating Tablets into his classroom, there was an increase in the number of students involved in the video game design club. He wants to share his paper with other educators and thinks that a good way to do this would be to have it published. He decides to send his paper to the journal “Education, Communication & Information” which is a peer reviewed publication.

As a peer reviewed journal, “Education, Communication & Information” has the following structure. An editor-in-chief – this individual is in charge of the publication. He or she accepts the papers submitted and then sends them to reviewers. The reviewers – there are several reviewers. They are usually individuals who are experienced in the field and are knowledgeable in various areas related to the field.

The editor-in-chief receives Fred’s paper on Tablet use. He then sends it out to several reviewers to look over. More than one person reads the paper in order to get a range of opinions. In a blind review, the reviewers are just given the paper without any knowledge of who wrote it. This insures that they are not influenced in any way during the review.

The reviewers look over the paper and provide one of three decisions. A. This paper is great. It contains quality material that would be of interest for others to read. We should publish it, B. This paper is good, but before we can publish it, it needs to be revised, or C. This paper is terrible. It would be a waste of time for anyone to read it. We should not publish it. Depending on what the reviewers decide, the editor-in-chief will let Fred know whether his paper will be published or not.

It is helpful for you to know if an article has been peer reviewed as it aids you when you evaluate the article. If you have a peer reviewed article, you know that it has already been evaluated by professionals in the field. This means that the article should have quality information. Of course you must still
evaluate the article based on your own specific needs, but you already have knowledge about many characteristics of the article.

To determine if an article is peer reviewed, you must look at the publication it is located in. If you have the physical periodical, look at the information in the front and back. Does it list reviewers, or describe how to submit an article? If you are in an electronic database such as EBSCOhost’s Academic Search Premier, click on the publication title. It often has information such as whether a publication is peer reviewed. You could also find the official website for a publication. It should note whether it is peer reviewed or not. If you continue to have questions, feel free to contact a librarian. They will be happy to help you decide if an article is peer reviewed or not.

In this video you learned about the process an article goes through to be published in a peer reviewed periodical, what that means for your evaluation, and ways to determine if an article is peer reviewed.