A journal article reflects the polished, finished outcome from a piece of research. It usually comprises some justification of purpose, a description of the methodology, some findings and a conclusion. The contents will have been deemed valid following review conducted by other experts in the field.
What is a journal article: The publication process

The Scientists develop the research idea

The research is conducted & results analysed

The Scientists perfect their write-up

They send it to a journal that they think is appropriate

The journal Editor contacts potential Reviewers

The Reviewers read the write-up and make comments/suggestions to the Editor

Based on these comments, the Editor:

- Asks the Authors to revise & resubmit the article
- Agrees that the article can be published, as is
- Rejects the article for publication in the journal
Journal articles come in a variety of forms:

- Research report / Research article / short report
- Registered report
- Review article
- Theoretical / General article
- Commentary / Discussion / Journal Club / Opinion article
What is a journal article: Badges & identifiers

Badges were proposed by the Open Science Framework to incentivize researchers to be more transparent – see https://osf.io/tvyxz/

For those journals that use badges, look out to see whether the article you’re reading has any badges.