

# Journal Citation Reports

## Journal Impact Factor (JIF)

The **Journal Impact Factor (JIF)** is a ratio which divides a journal's received citations by a count of its published articles. It's not a mathematical average, but it does provide an approximation of the mean citation rate for a typical article. The detailed explanation below will help you understand exactly what is counted in both the numerator and denominator of this ratio.

### Best practices when using the JIF:

- JIF values vary by discipline. What is good in one category may be very different than another.
- JIF is most useful when considered through the category percentile or quartile data which allow comparison of relative citation impact across different fields.
- JIF is a journal-level metric. It does not measure the contribution of individual papers or authors.

### The anatomy of the Journal Impact Factor

Journal Impact Factor™ is calculated using the following metrics:

$$\frac{\text{Citations in 2022 to items published in 2020 (2,169) + 2021 (1,914)}{\text{Number of citable items in 2020 (77) + 2021 (99)}} = \frac{4,083}{176} = 23.2$$

#### JIF numerator

A subset of all citations to this journal in the calendar year: citations only to items with a publication date from the prior two years.

These citations are sourced from all item types included in Web of Science Core Collection indexes:

- Science Citation Index
- Social Science Citation Index
- Arts & Humanities Citation Index
- Proceedings Citation Indexes
- Book Citation Indexes
- Emerging Sources Citation Indexes

Citations to all document types, even those excluded from the denominator, are included. [Visit this site](#) for details on the inclusion of Early Access content.

**JIF number:** A typical article or review from this journal has been cited about 23 times, one or two years after publication.

**JIF denominator:** The number of citable items this journal published in the prior two years.

Items identified in Web of Science Core Collection as Articles or Reviews are included here as citable items. These represent the size of the scholarly contributions of the journal. Items like editorials, letters, and news items are excluded from the denominator. These serve a different communications role that is not generally reflected through scholarly citation. The contributions of these materials to JIF is visualized in the Citation Distribution graph.

#### Why two years?

It takes time for articles to be cited, and these rates vary by field. Articles typically begin to reach a citation peak after two years in many fields. Some fields have a slower velocity and reach their peak over longer periods of time. The Five-year Journal Impact Factor may be a better choice in those categories.