

Brief Guide to Reviewers

The purpose of your review

As a peer reviewer, you are integral to the process of communicating rigorous science to the world. The purpose of your review is to provide the editor with an expert's assessment of the work described in the manuscript and to provide the authors with constructive feedback that may help them to improve their work before publication. Keep in mind that you are communicating to a peer in a professional capacity and work to stay objective and constructive. To explore the role of the reviewer in more depth, we recommend the free Nature Masterclasses [“Focus on Peer Review” online course](#).

Structure of the review

Start with a brief summary of the work and your general assessment of its quality and interest level for a specialized audience. Include specific comments on the scientific content and number each comment. If important references are missing, alert the authors and explain why the reference should be cited. There is no need to give feedback on typographical errors.

Do...

- ✓ Provide positive feedback as well as constructive criticism.
- ✓ Suggest experiments, controls, or analyses necessary to support the claims of the paper. Explain why the requested experiment is necessary.
- ✓ Provide references for any comments about the novelty of the paper.
- ✓ Comment on both the potential impact of the paper and its technical rigor.
- ✓ Provide helpful comments on how to improve the presentation of the work.
- ✓ Keep your tone professional and objective.

Don't...

- ✗ Focus only on the negative aspects of the paper.
- ✗ Request extensive new work for the sole purpose of making the paper more impactful (these comments should be qualified as “nice to have”).
- ✗ Simply state that a study is not novel without referring to specific sources.
- ✗ Give an editorial decision, such as “this paper should be rejected”. Remember that the decision will be made by the editors.
- ✗ Make inferences about the scientific quality of the data based on poor writing or figure quality.
- ✗ Make it personal. Do not comment on the perceived intelligence or expertise of the authors. Avoid comment on the English skills of the authors.