

# How to Write a Peer Review

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Peer review is part of the submission process in science (in journals and at conferences) and is used for quality assurance. It is usually carried out in a "double-blind procedure", which means that the reviewers do not know who they are reviewing and the authors do not know who is reviewing them. This serves to avoid conflicts that can arise through the process, but it also often bears the risk of very strong criticism in the guise of anonymity.

The other established version of the process is called "open peer review", also known as "signed peer review", where the review serves the same purpose but is not blinded. This version, in some cases, results in the publication of the review along with the paper.

In order to make the criticism as useful as possible, a few rules must be observed. The first rule is simple: reviewers must always bear in mind that it is not their job to simply criticize the authors, but to contribute to optimizing the abstract as much as possible and enriching it with an outside perspective. Of course, this also requires the use of positive language and an optimistic attitude.

Here are two links with a few useful tips for a good review, what it should provide and especially what you should do and what you should avoid.

<https://royalsociety.org/blog/2020/02/what-makes-a-good-or-bad-peer-review/>

<https://plos.org/resource/how-to-write-a-peer-review/>

## WRITE A REVIEW FOR ABSTRACTS IN THE COURSE: XYZ

**Words:**            **roughly 150-200 per abstract**

**Style:**            **If a reference is needed, APA 7** (see <https://apastyle.apa.org/>)

### **Start with overall impression and a summary**

This will help you to determine whether the abstract is easy to understand and can be categorized correctly. In turn, this feedback helps the authors to see how the readers categorize their paper and can reduce or better formulate things that are over- or underrated.

### **Evaluate the methods and the data**

Try to estimate if the method is valid to answer the questions at hand, and also if the data is sufficient to do so (In case the data was captured in the course from a small number of individuals, this critique might be clear even without mentioning it in the review). Here you can also mention additional methods, calculations ... to improve the calculations.

### **Go into the details**

Last but not least, also evaluate smaller details, like specific calculations, estimations, hypotheses, conclusions, and so on. Peer reviews are not there to correct typos or grammar, but in case there are some errors, that may be mentioned in general.

### **General rules**

The aim of the review is ultimately to improve the work of the authors and help to create the best possible version of the abstract.

- Always be polite, use language very carefully
- Argumentation should be as objective as possible
- Don't argue what is bad, suggest what might be better/clearer/more valid...
- Mention not only what should be improved, but also what is already very good