

How to revise a manuscript in the review process? You worked hard, put your heart and soul into the paper, got the reviews and they do not like it. They might even criticize your manuscript. Relax, that's normal.

State of mind: A good guideline is to remember that the editor has to look at your letter and make a decision, so you try to try to make it as easy as possible for them look at the letter and say "ok, I'll just accept it." The same holds for the reviewer.

Work flow: Then, start with reading all the reviews in detail. Understand that reviewers usually actually are trying to do their best, but they are often under heavy time constraints. Then write a complete answer to all issues listed. If the reviewer produces long text feel free to summarize the text. Often verbose reviews are quite repetitive and summarizing makes them more manageable. Only then do additional experiments/analysis.

LTE: In the letter to the editor emphasize and detail how the reviewers comments have allowed you to improve the paper. This is particularly important if they have not.

Start with about 4 lines of text that states that you want to thank the reviewers for their constructive criticism/ deep insights. Give a very short high level intro to the big revisions.

Make a revision in the paper for each point raised by the reviewers. Usually it is not a good idea to just argue against a reviewer point in the response letter without having that argument reflected by a revision/addition in the paper itself. First, this shows that the reviewer's comment made an impact on your paper. Second, as noted above, even an annoying misunderstanding by the reviewer reflects a real problem in your paper, namely that it was not clear enough to preempt said misunderstanding, and this merits some editing. The same in other words: If the comment is stupid it still should be taken constructively. A stupid comment usually just means that the reviewer couldn't understand the paper because it was too hard to read. If the comment seems stupid do rework the portions of the paper the reviewer criticized. Accept culpability in the response for writing in a confusing way, and state that this was corrected in the new revision and that you are sure it is much better for the readers now.

The reviewers are always right, even if they're wrong. That is to say that even if their comment reflects some daft misunderstanding of your elegant prose, this is still your fault (for not explaining things even more clearly), and thus the reviewer has provided you with an excellent "unclarity-detection" service.

Try to make it essentially unnecessary for the reviewer to look at the paper itself again, because all the relevant revisions (and context) are fully presented in the response letter. Reviewers are busy people and the easier you make it on them to do their job, the better.

You really want to demonstrate that you put a lot of work into the revision and the manuscript has been improved. Show additional figures. Detail how you did additional analysis.

Final: After all the revisions are made, let it all sit for a couple of days and then re-read the paper "from scratch", in order to ensure that your revisions have not ended up completely destroying the flow of the paper - if they have, it's back to the drawing board!