

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing



Reviewing in NLP – A Tutorial

Kevin Bretonnel Cohen, **Karën Fort**, Margot Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

July 5th, 2020



Who am I?

Karën Fort

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing



- Expertise in language resources for NLP
- Reviewing Approach: "Write it the way you'd like to read it for yourself"
- Biases:
 - "[...] everything looks like a nail" (i.e. I'm a specialist in manual annotation, so I tend to focus too much on it)
 - Strong preference for well-written papers
 - ...

Overview

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

1 Introduction

2 Background

3 The Actual Review

4 Reviewing a specific section

5 Ethics and reviewing

Where are we?

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

1 Introduction

2 Background

3 The Actual Review

- A Couple of Things we Know / you should Know
- Review Forms
- What else?

4 Reviewing a specific section

5 Ethics and reviewing

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

1 Introduction

2 Background

3 The Actual Review

- A Couple of Things we Know / you should Know
 - Review Forms
 - What else?

4 Reviewing a specific section

5 Ethics and reviewing

The actual review

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

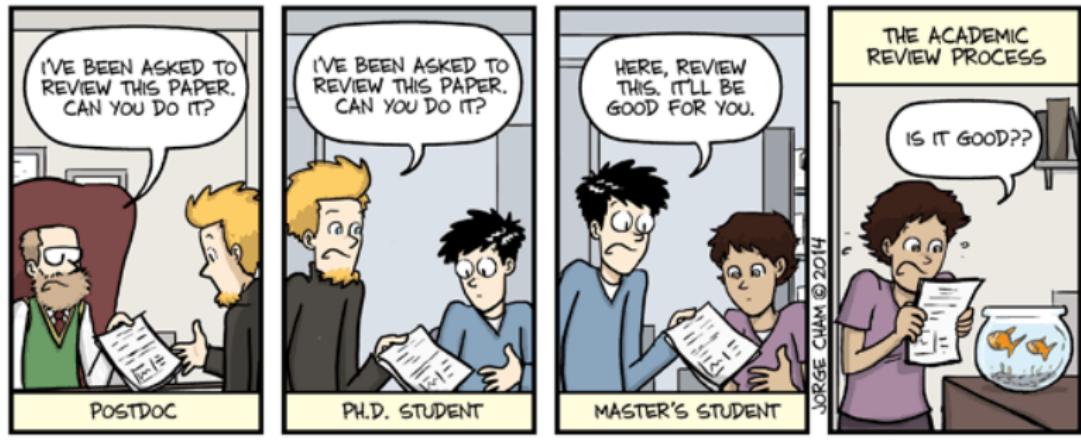
A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing



WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM

Source: <http://phdcomics.com/comics.php?f=1760>

Exercise: Reviewing the reviews

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction
Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms
What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing



- Read the reviews provided for **Paper 42**
- Do you think they are good/bad reviews?
Why?
- Live discussion on July 5th

What makes a good bad (easier to tell) review?

From the authors' point of view

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

- superficial reading of the paper
- rudeness or nastiness
- inflexibility
- expecting perfection
- reviewing your version of the paper rather than the submitted paper: interest in the topic, feeling about the paper, ...
- making unsupported claims about the paper
- [insert yours here]

Sources: <https://acl2017.wordpress.com/2017/02/23/last-minute-reviewing-advice/> and
<https://sites.umiacs.umd.edu/elm/2016/02/01/mistakes-reviewers-make/>

What makes a good bad (easier to tell) review?

From the area chairs/editors' point of view

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms
What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

- a **late** review (without advance warning and planning)
- a **lukewarm** review
- a positive review with low scores (an **incoherent** review)
- an **insulting** review
- [insert yours here]

Sources: <https://acl2017.wordpress.com/2017/02/23/last-minute-reviewing-advice/> and
<https://coling2018.org/reviewer-code-of-conduct/>

Exercise: Writing a review

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing



- Read **Paper 42**
- Write a short review
- Live discussion on July 5th

What you should ask yourself

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction
Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms
What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

- Did I take **enough time** to digest the paper?
 - Did I take **enough time** to write/review my review?
 - Did I focus on the **work**?
 - Are the comments I made **constructive**?
 - Are the comments I made **substantial** enough (are they grounded)?
 - Did I mention **something good** about the paper?
 - Did I **check**:
 - the accompanying code/data (if any)?
 - potential (self-)plagiarism? Salami-slicing?
- ?? How would I feel about receiving such a review?

How did you proceed?

One possibility...

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

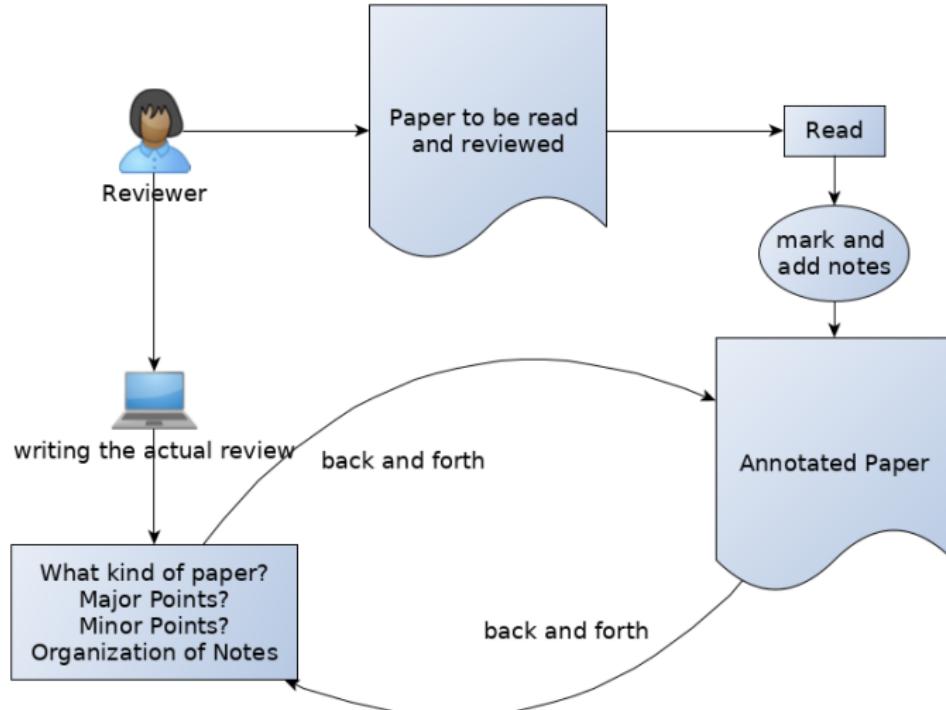
A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing





Not one possible procedure

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

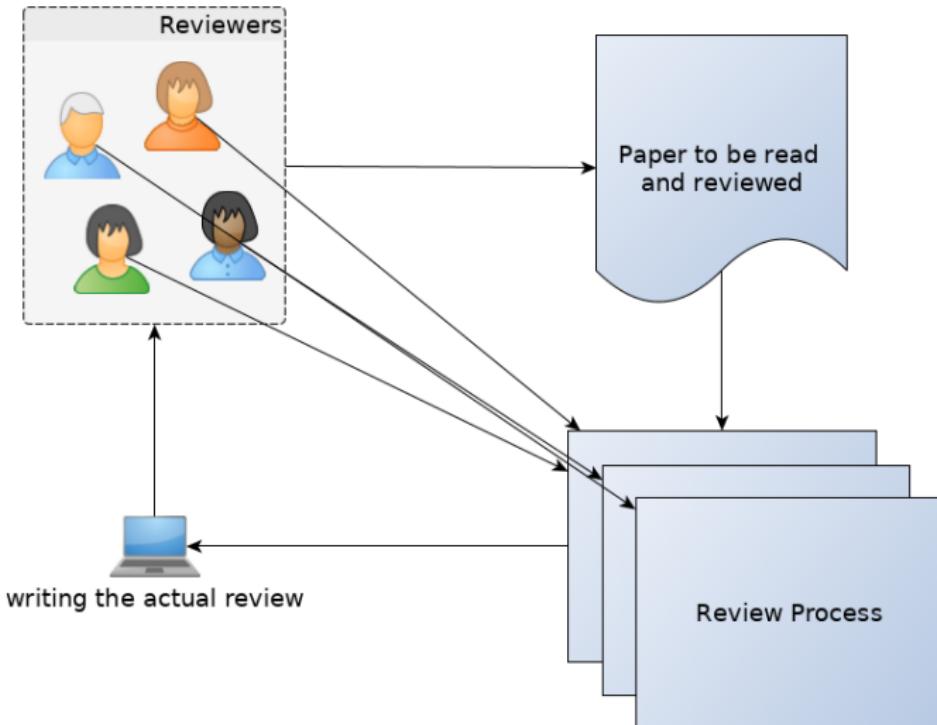
The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms
What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing





Reading is annotating

Reviewing in NLP – A Tutorial

A Couple of Things we Know / you should Know

Paper to Review

Main point

Strengths and Weaknesses

Conclusion

Text Placeholder: Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consetetur sadipscing elitr, sed diam nonumy eirmod tempor invidunt ut labore et dolore magna aliquyam erat, sed diam voluptua. **At vero eos et accusamus et justo duo dolores et ea rebum.** Stet clita kasd gubergren, no sea takimata sanctus est Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consetetur sadipscing elitr, sed diam nonumy eirmod tempor invidunt ut labore et dolore magna aliquyam erat, sed diam voluptua. **At vero eos et accusamus et justo duo dolores et ea rebum.** Stet clita kasd gubergren, no sea takimata sanctus est Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet.

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Approach

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms
What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

- What type of paper is it?

- Method paper
- Evaluation Paper
- Reproducibility paper
- Resource Paper
- Position/survey paper



- Identify the paper type and use appropriate evaluation criteria



NLP engineering experiment paper

Example from <http://coling2018.org/paper-types/>

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction
Background
The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms
What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

- Can you tell what research question was addressed?
 - What is the hypothesis?
 - How was it tested?
- Is the research technically sound and correct?
- Is there an error analysis?
- Is there meaningful comparison?
 - To the literature?
 - To baselines?



Reproduction paper

Example from <http://coling2018.org/paper-types/>

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

- Data/Code availability
 - Of the original research
 - Of the reproduction
- Description of the specific reproduction obstacles
- Generalizability: beyond reproduction?
- Informativeness: insight of the reproduction?
- Is there meaningful comparison to the original experiments?



Resource paper

Example from <http://coling2018.org/paper-types/>

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Brettonel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms
What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

- How was the resource produced?
 - Source material?
 - Workforce?
- How was the resource evaluated?
 - What was the quality control procedure?
 - Was inter-annotator agreement computed?
- Are metadata and accessibility detailed?
- How does it compare to existing resources?



Survey paper

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction
Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

- Organization: does the survey address a specific question?
- Scope: Does the paper identify a reasonably focused area to survey?
- Thoroughness: does the paper cover all of the relevant literature?
 - Is the source of the literature surveyed clear?
 - Are criteria for inclusion/exclusion of papers in the survey clear?
- Outlook: Does the paper identify areas for future work ?



More generally

- What is the paper about?
- What do they use?
 - Data
 - Methods
 - Tools
 - ...
- What are the results?
- What are the claims?
- Do results and claims match?



First (or last?) step: write a summary!



More generally

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

- Are the hypotheses sound?
- Is the experimental setup suited to the problem stated?
- Is the evaluation sound?
- Is the problem well-motivated?
- What is the take-home message?
- Are the conclusions supported by the results?
- ...



Writing the review

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

- Follow the order of the paper
- List strengths (and weaknesses?)
- Major vs. minor issues

Support your claims with [appropriate references](#)

Switch/Break

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing



source: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Mt._Lavinia_-_Governor%27s_High_Tea.jpg

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

1 Introduction

2 Background

3 The Actual Review

- A Couple of Things we Know / you should Know
- **Review Forms**
- What else?

4 Reviewing a specific section

5 Ethics and reviewing

Review forms

ACL, COLING, EMNLP, LREC, Konvens, SwissText, TALN, etc.

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

Most conferences in the domain use the same basic type of form with:

- numeric scores
- free text form(s)
- confidential comments

Exercise: What problem do you see with the following fragment of a review?

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction
Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing



- **Quantitative score:** Review of related literature: 1 (Major relevant papers are missing)
- **Comments to authors:** There are missing references.

Exercise: What problem do you see with the following fragment of a review?

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing



- **Quantitative score:** Review of related literature: 1 (Major relevant papers are missing)
- **Comments to authors:** There are missing references.

How could it be improved?



Numeric scores (beware!)

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

- **Consistent** with your textual review
- **Sanity Check**



Online vs offline review forms

or else . . .

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction
Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

Online

- + easy to fill in
- limited session (you might lose your scores/text)

Offline

- + no limit in time
- not so easy to fill in (old-school text format)

Discussion clipart: MRafizeldi / CC BY-SA



Online vs offline review forms

or else...

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction
Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

Online

- + easy to fill in
- limited session (you might lose your scores/text)
- bias due to the form?

Offline

- + no limit in time
- not so easy to fill in (old-school text format)
- bias due to the form?

→ (Possible) Mixed approach: write your (text) review in a text file, then copy/paste in the online form

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ACL 2020 review form

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms
What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

- "What is this paper about, what contributions does it make, what are the main strengths and weaknesses?"
- "Reasons to accept"
- "Reasons to Reject"
- "Overall Recommendation"
 - "Transformative"
 - "Exciting"
 - "Strong"
 - "Leaning Positive"
 - "Leaning Negative"
 - "Mediocre"
 - "Weak"
 - "Poor"

ACL 2020 review form

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction
Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms
What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

- "Reviewer Confidence"
- "Author Response"
- "Questions for the Author(s)"
- "Missing References"
- "Typos, Grammar, Style"
- "Additional Suggestions"
- "Confidential Information"



Constraints and biases of review forms

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

*"What is this paper about, what contributions does it make, what are the main **strengths** and **weaknesses**?"*

[ACL 2020 review form]

VS

Major points and minor points.
[Most bio-info review forms]

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Using confidential Comments

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing



Source: Free photo by Tophee Marquez from <https://www.pexels.com>



Using confidential Comments

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms
What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

- Additional Comments wrt. the overall recommendation
- Special circumstances that apply to this paper and might allow for acceptance/rejection despite low(er)/high(er) marks
- Comments about the author(s) rather than the paper
- Plagiarism / salami slicing concerns
- Concerns about your own review (level of expertise, discovery of COI...)
- Anonymity breaches (including for *you*: perhaps you have reviewed the same paper before...)

Anything else **you** think is important, but should **not** be visible to the other reviewers and/or the authors



(very) Bad papers?

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing



Do not **waste** your time
vs
make a pedagogical effort

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(very) Bad papers?



Do not **waste** your time

vs

make a **pedagogical effort**

→ depends if you feel like the authors made an effort?

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Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

Switch/Break

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing



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Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

1 Introduction

2 Background

3 The Actual Review

- A Couple of Things we Know / you should Know
- Review Forms
- What else?

4 Reviewing a specific section

5 Ethics and reviewing

What else?

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing



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Plagiarism

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

The image shows the Merriam-Webster dictionary website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for GAMES, BROWSE THESAURUS, WORD OF THE DAY, and WORDS AT PLAY. Below the navigation bar, the Merriam-Webster logo is displayed inside a red circle, followed by the text "SINCE 1828". To the right of the logo, the word "plagiarizing" is shown in a large, bold, black font. Below "plagiarizing", there are two buttons: "DICTIONARY" and "THESAURUS".

plagiarize *verb*



Save Word

pla·gia·rize | \plā-jē-ə-rīz ⓘ also -jē-ə-

plagiarized; plagiarizing

Definition of *plagiarize*

transitive verb

: to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own : use (another's production) without crediting the source

source: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/plagiarizing>

Exercise: Back to Paper 42

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction
Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing



- Re-read _Paper_42
- Is it possible that part of it is, in fact, plagiarism?
- If yes, find it and find the source

From plagiarism...

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Introduction
Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms
What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

Plagiarism detection software is usually available in your University, e.g. Compilatio (Sorbonne University), iThenticate (University of Amsterdam), etc...

Or you have your own similarity detection system

Or your favorite search engine

Just use it!

... to salami-slicing detection

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Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms
What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

A side effect of looking for plagiarism is that you may find salami-slicing (or self-plagiarism):

"Salami publication (sometimes called bologna or trivial publication) is the practice of dividing one significant piece of research into a number of small experiments [...] to increase the number of publications."

<https://www.law.hku.hk/researchintegrity/salami-slicing/>

Exercise: Research material in Paper 42

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Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing



- Is the material available?
- Does it look relevant?

Reproducibility

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Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

When data is provided or linked to:

- check if it really exists
- check if it does not break the anonymity
- if time allows, try to download and run it



Writing a review

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Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

- Plan enough **time** to do it
- Be **polite**
- Focus on the **work**
- Avoid trivialities
- Do not attack the authors
- Take specifics into account (e.g. low-resourced language)
- Be as **elaborate** and **explicit** as possible
- The worse the numeric scores, the more elaborate the review should be to support this

What's next?

by Kevin B. Cohen

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Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
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Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

1 Introduction

2 Background

3 The Actual Review

4 Reviewing a specific section

5 Ethics and reviewing

What's next?

by Aurélie Névéol

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

Kevin
Bretonnel
Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

1 Introduction

2 Background

3 The Actual Review

4 Reviewing a specific section

5 Ethics and reviewing

And now, the punchline...

Reviewing the review tutorial

Reviewing in
NLP – A
Tutorial

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Cohen, Karën
Fort, Margot
Mieskes,
Aurélie Névéol

Introduction

Background

The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms

What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing

- Thank you for your attendance
- Your feedback is welcome
- See (hear) you during the live session!

We would love to hear from you!

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Introduction
Background
The Actual
Review

A Couple of Things
we Know / you
should Know

Review Forms
What else?

Reviewing a
specific
section

Ethics and
reviewing