

Navigating the Revise and Resubmit Process

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Overview

- Getting to Revise And Resubmit
- Three Key Principles of R&R
- Reading Signals and Preparing to Revise
- Revision Process
- Response Letter: Format & Style
- Final Words

Getting to Revise & Resubmit

Improving Your Chances for R&R

- Write the Story that Fits the Data
- Know Who your Primary Audience Is
- Tell the Story So that All will Understand
- Pick the Right Journal
- Study Its Editorial Board
- Request inclusion/exclusion if necessary

The Decision Letter

- Complete rejection, Or Conditional Rejection
- The Stages of Grief
 - Denial
 - Anger
 - Bargaining
 - Depression
 - Acceptance

Three Key Principles of R&R

Responder's Credo

- I will be *happy* that I have been invited to revise...
 - my responses will reflect my joy!! ;:-)
- *The customer is always right*
- *No comment is too small for attention*
- *I will exert great effort in revision*

The Reviewer is (almost) always Right

- Rarely productive to try to make the process a debate
- Only when there is a clear error is there much point in strongly objecting— the reviewer must “buy” the paper
- The Editor is more right than a Reviewer

No comment is beneath response

- Ignoring a comment is worse than disagreeing
- Help the reviewer see exactly how and exactly where you have addressed each issue
- If you are unsure how to interpret a comment, say so. And respond according to your best guess as to intent. The Editor can help.

Revision is Hard Work

- We often spend much more time on each version of revision than we did on the original draft
- Be *thorough* in correcting and in explaining the corrections and tradeoff decisions made
- You now have three (or four bosses), but the revision must still speak in **one voice**

Reading Signals & Preparing to Revise

Some General Observations

- Response is a dish best served cold
(...apologies to Willie Shakespeare)
- Understand the core of the criticism
- The Editor's letter is most important
- Take care not to lose a favorable Reviewer

Clues in the Reviews

- A long review on the first round is often a sign that the reviewer wishes to help
- Usually, you only want a very short review on the second or third version
- Conflicting suggestions can work for you
- *Everything* is important to some degree

Revision Process

The Process of Group Revision

- 1. Come to consensus understanding of the key challenges in the revision
- 2. Detail what must be done
- 3. Assign specific roles for revision
- 4. If needed, empirical work comes first
- 5. Write, then respond-- or respond and then write?

Key Steps

- Make sure everyone
 - Agrees on what the key issues are
 - Knows what the (new) results are
 - Knows what the story being told is

Response Letter: Format & Style

The Format of the Response

- Letter to the editor
- A summary statement of major revisions
- A point-by-point response first to the editor, then to each reviewer
 - first, indicate the specific reviewer comment
 - then, indicate how you responded, why, and on what page in the revised manuscript this occurs

Two Preferred Styles of Presenting Reviewer Comments and Responses

- (1) *Reproduce* their exact comments, then respond— usually with different margins, font
 - OR
- (2) *Interpret* their comments and respond as above

Never simply list the comment number and respond

The Style of the Response

- Be Courteous but Direct
- Be very Clear ***
(if they don't understand, *you* are to blame)
- Be Complete but concise
 - Paraphrase, Use quotes sparingly

Final Words

Random Pieces of Advice

- Early in your career, show your reviews to experienced colleagues (once you have recovered from the shock)
- Get to the revision as quickly as possible, focus your revising as thoroughly and quickly as possible-- Your odds have gone way up!!
- **Avoid ‘improving’ parts not critiqued**

You will never again think of R&R
as ‘rest and relaxation’

Key Points

- To err is human, to revise successfully divine
- When the way is dark, let the Editor be your guide
- To *ignore* a comment is the Deadliest Sin
- Seek to make the reviewer's job easy
- If you must err in revision, err on the side of accommodation.

It is better to share at least some of your brilliance with the world than to keep it all to yourself!!