

Anonymous

Biology Department

The point of peer-review is not nitpicking or nagging the paper. Rather, you should focus your feedback. The writer is the one in charge of making sure that the paper is free of error. Your role is to give them insight to the questions that they are trying to answer. Attempt to understand what they are saying. Search for **flaws** in their arguments. Find questions in need of answering and ask them. Make the writer think about ways to improve what they are writing, more so than improving the writing itself.



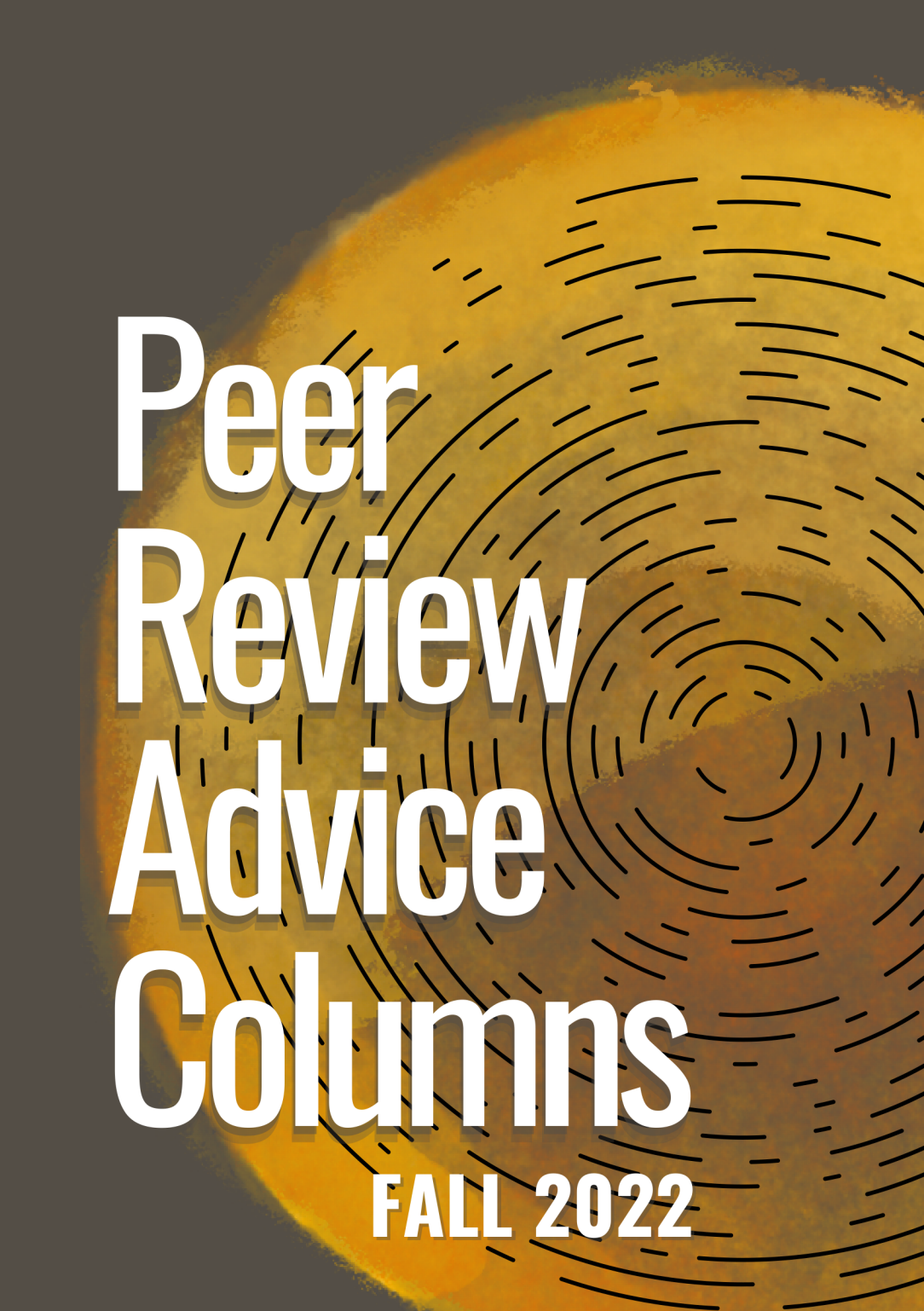
Anonymous

Plant Biology Department

In STEM, we have cultivated a culture of “objectivity” that can make our work feel cold and sterile. However, for many of us, our work is often deeply intertwined with our sense of self and thus our writing can feel deeply personal, like an extension of ourselves. I find this framing and context important to remember for when I act as a “reviewer” of someone’s work. When we are reminded that another human, with the capacity for a full range of emotions, much like ourselves, will read and internalize our criticism of their work, it warrants heavy consideration on how we communicate that feedback. **Feedback** does not need to “tear down” a piece of work in order to “build it back better”. We can and should reframe our role as reviewers as one that will bring a new perspective to an existing piece of work that can offer our colleagues support and encouragement to be the best that they can be.

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The Writing intensive Program



Peer Review Advice Columns

FALL 2022

Adam Hannon- Hatfield

Biochemistry & Molecular Biology
Department

Peer review is an integral part of the scientific process. It functions as a quality control step of exploration and scientific training. Leaders in their respective fields provide valuable feedback of the experimental design, **communication** of the results, and conclusions drawn from those data. They can point out logical flaws, or some aspect of previous work that was overlooked and in doing so, improve the quality of the work. As a training tool, it helps younger scientists identify these kinds of flaws and avoid them in their own work as well as helping them contextualize results in the bigger picture.

FEEDBACK

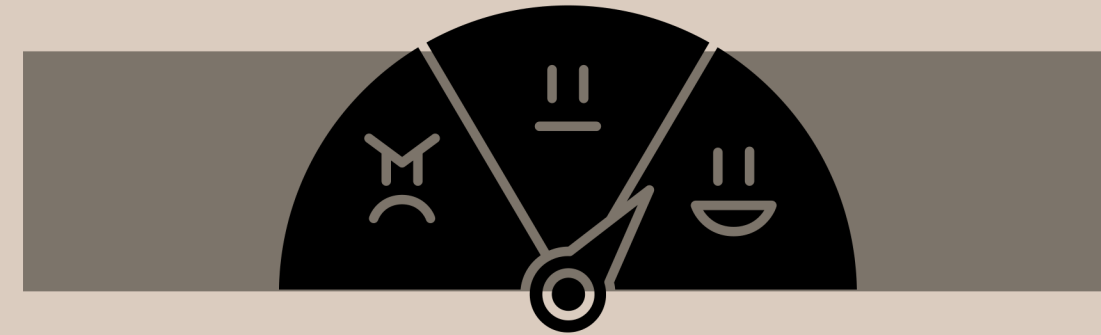
Gabriella Giordano

Marine Sciences Department

Peer review is a valuable resource for both writers and reviewers in that it helps improve writing skills on both ends. Writers receive feedback on their material from someone who may or may not be super familiar with his or her research area but nonetheless is on the same level as he or she is. Reviewers also gain insight on the do's and do not's of writing by reading others work. Have you ever been asked to come up with an Instagram caption for someone else and can come up with it instantly, but struggle to write your own? Peer review can be similar that way by providing an outside perspective that can be helpful in reflecting on your own work. Good peer feedback includes specific, but kind, criticism of the material. Commenting on a **balance** of good aspects, grammar/ sentence structure and things to improve is often the most effective and useful type of peer review.

Erica Friedman

Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Sciences
Department



While peer review might be intimidating, it can be a **critical** part of the writing development process. A good peer review not only gives your peers quality feedback, but also helps you to become a better reviewer of your own work. Quality feedback is feedback that you would want to receive on your paper. Put yourself in their shoes and think how you would want a reviewer to respond if this was your paper. This does not mean this will always be positive, so be mindful and empathetic when providing constructive criticism.

Seth Lattner

Population Health Department

Peer review is an **essential component** of scientific writing. It is not only a tool for proofreading manuscripts to ensure that the flow and grammar are up to the journal's standards, but it is also important in upholding the rigor and reproducibility that are crucial to conducting science. Peer-reviewed articles have a credibility that is lacking in other forms of scientific media, as it has been vetted by experts in the field. As a student, beginning to peer review other's work allows you to develop critical thinking skills that will help you both as a reviewer and as a writer.

Payton Johnson

Public Administration, Science Policy
Department

Peer review, though often seen as time-consuming, is a keystone in the scientific discipline. The effort put into understanding and reviewing another person's work directly translates to benefits for both the reviewer and the reviewee. Having a peer take the time to edit and suggest corrections, as well as give kudos where they are due, is a great way to improve your approach to communicating science in a low-risk setting. If you are reviewing another scientist's paper, you can emulate successful writing **strategies** in your peer's paper to strengthen your own writing while exposing yourself to new and exciting research.

Priscilla Howard

Entomology Department

Peer review plays an important role in the sciences, and all scholarly publications, by ensuring the quality of the work and its significance within the greater community. My philosophy on peer review is that it is a necessary and valuable practice that utilizes collaboration to progress scholarship. A good reviewer takes time to thoroughly engage with the work, find its **strengths and weaknesses**, and provide constructive criticism to improve its overall quality, readability and scientific impact.

Ashley McCormick

Entomology Department

CONSTRUCTIVE

Strong peer review should be formulaic and precise while maintaining a **constructive** and positive tone. High-quality peer review should be just as iterative as the scientific writing process. It doesn't help the writer if you give vague, fluffy feedback. Instead, aim to list specific changes that could improve the tone, clarity, or overall message of the writing, and explain how and why you'd do it that way. It's not necessary to outright direct the writer; you want to uphold their original style and ideas. However, it's often helpful to provide possible corrections to strengthen their arguments.

Eva Walker-Fairchild

Comparative Biomedical Sciences
Department

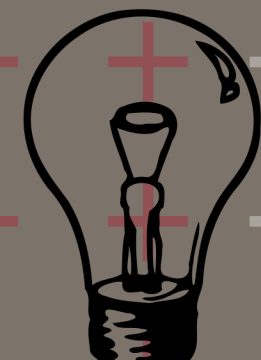
“A **Win-Win** Situation”

Whether it be a scientific paper or a creative writing essay, peer review is a fantastic tool for both the reviewer and the reviewee. As a writer, I often get stuck in a rut trying to edit my own papers. A fresh pair of eyes can always help with making sure that my ideas are conveyed clearly. As a reviewer, besides helping a peer, it is beneficial to myself as reading someone else's writing can improve my own. I take notice of effective parts of their writing and mistakes similar to ones that I may make. I can then incorporate skills I learned from reviewing other's papers into my own writing.

Gabriel Tigreros

Entomology Department

For me, peer review is most beneficial when it helps me gain other perspectives with regard to the structuring of an idea or argument. We may feel that the way we transition from one thought to the next makes sense, but there is something about having someone suggest alternative structuring that makes the idea feel more exciting and **dynamic**. The argument becomes something you can play around with as opposed to something static. This can be energizing, especially when the idea or argument is something you have been working on for an extended amount of time.



Tasneem Campwala

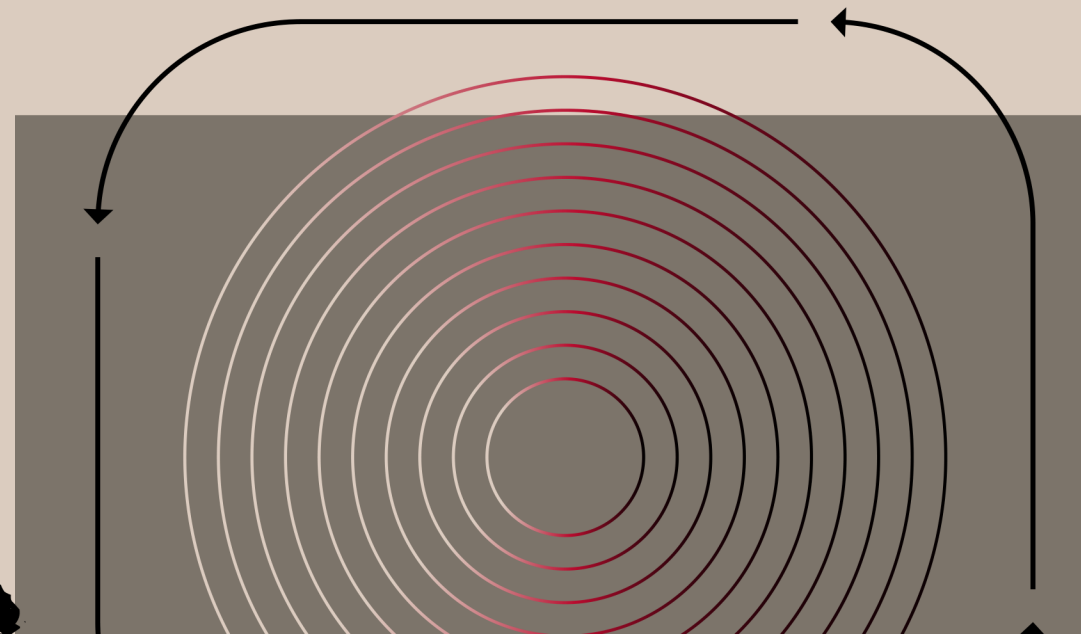
Bioinformatics Department

Most people hesitate at the thought of getting one's work peer reviewed. However, peer review makes up a very critical part of research. It holds the power to make or break one's work. It can bolster the accuracy and credibility of the findings. Most **path breaking** discoveries are a result of repeated checks and rectifying flaws that a researcher may have overlooked. Hence, providing solid data to clearly back up one's claims is extremely important. Providing feedback during the peer review process is a job of great responsibility and must thus be done with great precision and should contain a good balance of genuine critical inputs that have the single purpose to improve the research.

Jordan Allcorn

Marine Sciences Department

Everyone has a different style of reviewing other people's work. Some like to give broad feedback in order to nudge the writer in the right direction, while others take the "red pen" approach and edit almost every line. Because there is a wide range of how reviewers give feedback, having multiple peers read your work is important for receiving the best feedback you can get. In addition to this process, you will learn how you would like to give feedback to others and form your own reviewing style, which perpetuates the **cycle** of scientists improving other scientist's work.



Anonymous

Comparative Biomedical Sciences
Department

Peer review is important to be able to understand your writing through a **different perspective** that is not your own. Being able to get feedback clarifies what you are doing that is on track to the assignment, and what you can improve on. It is important to be specific when you are peer reviewing someone else's work. It is important to understand that you are reviewing their work, not trying to fix it and make it into how you would complete the assignment. Peer reviewing can be beneficial to both you and the person whose work you are reviewing. The person gets feedback on their work, and you get an insight on how you can possibly improve your own writing. Being in the "grader" point of view gives you a different perspective on your own writing as well as someone else's

Aidan Troha

Division of Biological Sciences
Department

Peer review, as many know, is a means for which **voices** are heard by supporting one another's works. Across disciplines, it is the penultimate step in the writing process. However, many writers approach peer review with trepidation. This attitude must be rephrased. Instead, think of it as a mechanism for improvement through positive criticism as well as validation; peer review shouldn't only be a tool used to convey one's analysis of another's prose, but rather a strategy for unifying the voices of others into a cohesive piece that ensures validity and identity.



Lucy Ubaka

Infectious Diseases Department

For peer review that can practically help students, in process class writings to achieve the basic methods of writing can go a long way. Peer review for the writing course or on a particular topic taught in class can take five to twenty minutes by the instructor. After class writings or take-home assignments for the same topic treated in class would be given to the students after reviewal in class. The goal is to test their understanding and improvement on the same topic. Students are able to point out mistakes and write in a better way about that topic because they are familiar with the topic. In essence, treating a course in class, reviewing students' performance, and giving it to them as a homework helps them **improve** their writing.

Clayton Hale

Plant Biology Department

2=1

I have two main philosophies or thoughts when I peer review, first, be over the top with my **positivity**. When I give feedback, I try and leave at least two positive comments for every negative comment. Second, I always remind myself that just because a method or analysis isn't the way I would do it, doesn't mean it isn't justifiable and appropriate. As long as the methods or interpretations would be generally accepted by the scientific community at large then they should be acceptable to me. I believe this holds in the classroom with students, as well.

More Content

SCRAMBLE INDEX

"A good peer review not only gives your peers quality feedback, but also helps you to become a better reviewer of your own work."

- Erica Friedman

Writing Intensive Program (WIP):

<http://wip.uga.edu/public-writing-initiative>

@wipatuga



The Classic Journal:

<https://theclassicjournal.uga.edu>

@classicwriting

Feed back	Critical	Flaws
Balance	Win-Win	Improve
Strengths and Weaknesses		Communication Strategies
Essential Component		Dynamic
Cycle		Constructive
Positivity		Different Perspective
Voices		Path breaking