

# Doing a review in 3 easy steps

## 1. Broad read through

- Read the abstract to get an idea of the scope of the paper and the key features of each section.
- Take in the headings and familiarise yourself with the structure of the paper.
- Read a few sentences from each section to get an idea of the style of writing.
- Check the figures or tables for some key results.

## 2. Detailed read through

- Based on the journal guidelines, write down any specific comments. This could include comments about the originality, the order of sections, length, readability, and overall quality of the article; any major problems, contradictions or omissions.
- Note down some suggestions for revision in how to address these issues.
- Provide positive comments about the qualities of the paper, as well as your critical ideas for revisions.

## 3. Write up your summary statement

- Should present your overall view of the article, highlights from the paper, the value it will add to the journal, and the major areas of revision. This should be the introduction to your review.
- This helps clarify what you've understood as the main points and shows the authors how a reader perceives their article.



### Handout - Peer Review Workshop

Sarah Severson, University of Alberta Library.

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# Tips for Giving Good Feedback

## Tip #1: Make sure you understand the paper

- Provide feedback that indicates your understanding
  - From what I understand, in this section you are...
  - It seems to me that the focus of this section is...
  - I am not sure I understand the main point here. It seems to me that...

## Tip #2: Don't just say what's wrong. For each criticism or comment provide suggestions for improvement

**Bad:** The opening is terrible, I don't understand what you're writing.

**Better:** The opening paragraphs of the paper do not provide the main thesis or central argument.

**Best:** The opening paragraphs of the paper do not provide the main thesis or central argument. I suggest you revise and refocus the introduction to provide a clear argument from the start. From my understanding, this is the central thesis?: \_\_\_\_\_ Move this higher up in the paper.

**Bad:** Page 2 goes on forever, it is completely useless.

**Better:** Page 2 has a lot of extra information, it's difficult to know what the focus is.

**Best:** Page 2 has a lot of extra information, it's difficult to know what the focus is. I suggest removing this section or condensing it for clarity.

## Tip #3: Don't copyedit

- Peer review isn't copyediting.
- Focus on the content, note grammar issues in passing if it is particularly poor.
- Ignore the grammar issues completely unless they are affecting your understanding of the material.



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