

# Peer Review Workshop

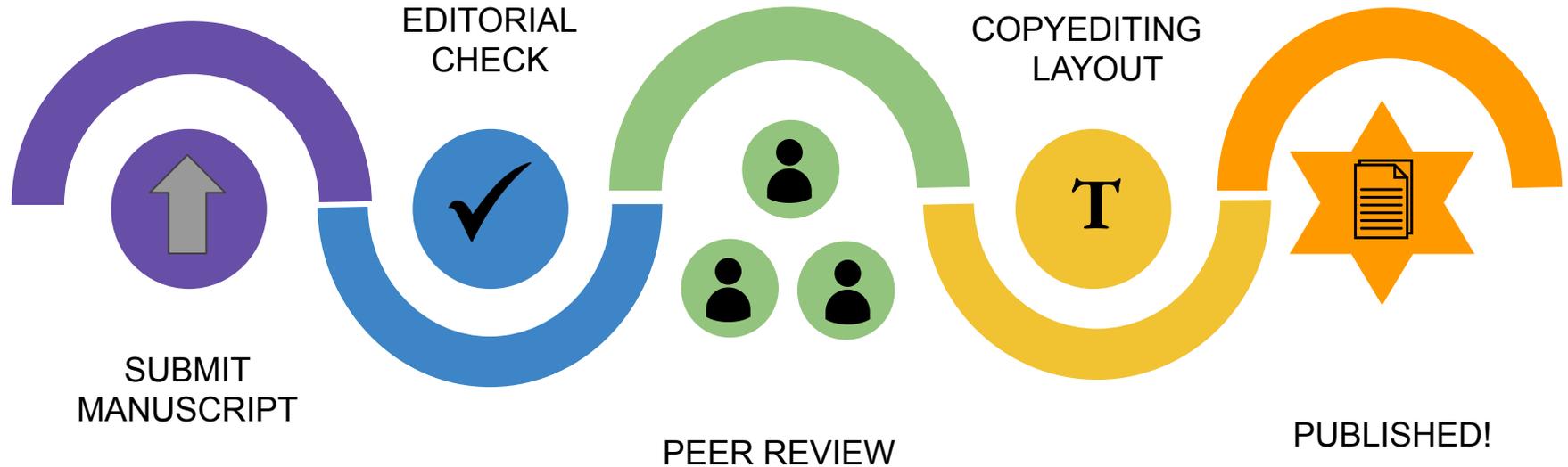
Figuring out the ins and outs of the peer review process and how to be an effective reviewer

## Workshop resources

- Download the slides with notes at <https://bit.ly/peer-review-slides>
- Reference [Indigenous Knowledges and a Relational Peer Review Process](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1525/irqr.2016.9.4.381) at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1525/irqr.2016.9.4.381>



# How does it work? Scholarly Publishing Workflow



# What is peer review?

a process by which a **scholarly work** (such as a paper or a research proposal) is checked by a group of experts in the same field (**peers**) to make sure it meets the necessary standards before it is published or accepted.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/peer%20review>



# Peer review is...

- High-level, constructive feedback on the overall content of the submission
- Generous and considerate
- Aim to improve the work so that the author is publishing the highest-quality version that they can reach with support from peers.



# Peer review is NOT ....

- Unkind, overly critical, or disparaging
- Copy editing, proofreading, or layout editing (these come later in the publishing process)



Who does  
peer review?

**YOU!**

# 4 main types of peer review

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1. Editorial review
2. Single (reviewer) anonymous
3. Double anonymous
4. Open review

# 4 main types of peer review

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## 1. Editorial review

- Editorial board member is conducting the review, rather than an external reviewer
- Both reviewer and author know each other's names

## 2. Single (reviewer) anonymous

- The authors **do not** know the names of their reviewers
- Reviewers **do not** know the names of the other reviewers
- Reviewers **do** know the names of the authors

# 4 main types of peer review

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## 3. Double anonymous

- Both the reviewer and the author are anonymous to one another
- Author is asked to anonymize their paper before submitting it

## 4. Open review

- Umbrella term for many types
- Author and reviewer names are available to each other

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Polls: Can you guess which type(s) of peer review best apply to each statement?

# Double anonymous

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- Pro: Reviewer only considers the content of the work and can't be influenced by what they know or assume about the author
- Con: Anonymity can give license for being overly critical or unkind
  - Anonymity doesn't eliminate bias

“This type of review may reduce bias because the reviewer focuses on the content of the work and not what they know or assume about the author”

# Editorial Review

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- Pro: Faster, works well for book reviews and things that aren't original research
- Con: Considered less rigorous than calling on external peers

“This type of review can speed up the review process because the journal doesn't need to look for peers from beyond the editorial team”

# Single anonymous

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- Pro: Useful for niche subject areas with few experts
- Con: Reviewer may be influenced by knowing the author's name
  - Reviewers may deliberately delay the process so they can publish first

“An author is researching a specific type of rare bird that is only studied by a few scientists around the world. The scientists who will review the work can guess who wrote the paper, since there is so few of them studying this particular bird. What type of peer review is the most suitable?”

# Open review

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- Pro: Relational and transparent, reviewers are accountable and get credit for their work
- Con: May be considered less robust in some disciplines where double anonymous is considered the gold standard

“This type of review can allow for a dialogue between the author and reviewer, which may be more relational and transparent than other types of review”

# None of these!

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- Bias is always possible when doing peer review, and it's important to be aware of how our perspectives and worldviews influence our feedback.

“This type of review eliminates all chances of bias from the process”

# Understanding the peer review process

# How do you become a reviewer?

## 1. Pick the right journal(s) for you

Make a short list of journals you'd like to review for and go look at their

- Mission, Aim and Scope
- Reviewer policy
- Reviewer expectations



# How do you become a reviewer?

2. Sign up and indicate your interest in being being a reviewer

- Contact information
- Keywords about what you can review



# How do you become a reviewer?

3. You receive an invitation to review an article!

- Read the manuscripts title & Abstract
- Check the deadline

Do you accept or decline?

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# How do you become a reviewer?

## 4. You accept the invitation to review!

Go to the journal website and see if there is any guidance. Every journal will have different expectations.

- Review guidelines
- Review forms



Reviewer policy, guidelines, forms,  
rubrics... oh my!

# Review policy and process



# FEMBOT

<https://adanewmedia.org/beta-reader-and-review-policy/>

## Review Process

*Ada* is committed to a transparent, productive, and rigorous peer review process. *Ada's* peer review process asks a great deal of reviewers and community members who participate in the open peer review process. Because of this, we will only publish original contributions that have not been published, or submitted for publication, elsewhere. *Ada's* peer review involves two main phases: Pre-Review and Open Peer Review.

**Pre-Review:** The editor(s) or special issue editors of an issue have four options in this initial phase of review:

1. Editor(s) can reject a contribution, if they deem it unsuitable for the journal (e.g. too long, inferior quality, not relevant to the issue's theme or the mission of *Ada*).
2. Editor(s) can solicit expert reviewers for contributions that fall outside their own area(s) of expertise. This review will take place on the Ada Journal Review site, which allows expert reviewers' comments to be visible to later reviewers. This part of the process will be open only to the editor(s) and expert reviewers.

**Open Peer Review:** Upon completion of the Pre-review phase, contributions are posted to the *Ada* Journal Review site, where they are peer reviewed by members of the Fembot Collective for an additional three weeks. After Open Peer Review has been completed, authors will have at least two weeks to revise their contributions. Upon submitting a revised contribution, all contributions will be published and archived in a specific "issue" on the *Ada* Journal website.

# Peer Review Guidelines

## Reviewer guide

Click [here](#) to access the Reviewer Area in our manuscript tracking system.

- [Reviewing for Development](#)
- [Guidelines for reviewing Research Articles and Reports](#)
- [Guidelines for reviewing Techniques and Resources Articles and Reports](#)
- [Guidelines for reviewing Commissioned Articles](#)
  - [Reviews](#)
  - [Primers](#)
  - [Hypotheses](#)
  - [At a Glance](#)

## Guidelines for Reviewing Research Articles and Reports

In reviewing an article for Development, we ask referees to consider two main questions. Firstly, what is the advance made in the paper and how significant is this for the field? Secondly, do the data reported in the paper justify the conclusions drawn? Where referees are positive about potential publication, we ask that comments should be focussed on essential revisions, rather than potential extensions of the study. Where referees would not recommend publication, we ask that the comments clearly detail the problems or limitations with the study. Referees are of course welcome to provide feedback on extending the scope of the study, but these should be clearly specified as such. We strongly encourage referees to view the Referee Report Form before starting to review a paper. When reviewing an article, please bear in mind the following points:

<https://journals.biologists.com/development/pages/reviewer-guide>

## **ACTIVITY:** Let's look at some **peer review guidelines**

1. Go to [bit.ly/peer-review-guide](https://bit.ly/peer-review-guide)
2. Pick one or two of the sample guidelines
3. Take 5 minutes and quickly scan them  
What do you notice? What surprises you?
4. Share your comments in the Google Doc under the guidelines you looked at

# Doing a review in 3 easy steps

Download a handout <https://bit.ly/peer-review-handout>

# 1. Start with a **broad read** through

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- 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. Go back and do a **detailed read** through

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- 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

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- 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.

# Example of a summary statement

“This is an engaging article with robust methodology that purposefully questions our knowledge of the subject. However, the presentation of results is somewhat confusing, and the readability of the discussion could be improved. Addressing both these issues will make this interesting paper more impactful.”

## Read review examples by looking at open reviews

- Royal Society has several science journals that publish their open review  
[https://royalsocietypublishing.org/action/downloadSupplement?doi=10.1098/rspb.2019.2047&file=rspb20192047\\_review\\_history.pdf](https://royalsocietypublishing.org/action/downloadSupplement?doi=10.1098/rspb.2019.2047&file=rspb20192047_review_history.pdf)
- <https://publons.com/review/101353/>
- <https://publons.com/review/3719/>

# Tips for Giving Good Feedback

# Notes on giving good feedback

Always ask yourself

Does this comment help  
improve the manuscript?

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# 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...

Helps author know you're on the same page as them (or not!)

## Feedback Tip #2: Don't just say what's wrong

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For each criticism or comment provide a suggestions for improvement

# Feedback Tip #2: Don't just say what's wrong

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## Example

-  The opening is terrible, I don't understand what you're writing.
-  The opening paragraphs of the paper do not provide a main thesis or central argument.  
The opening paragraphs of the paper do not provide a 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.

# Feedback Tip #2: Don't just say what's wrong

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## Example



Page 2 goes on forever, it is completely useless.



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



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.

# Feedback Tip #3: Don't Copyedit!

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- 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.

# Wrap up

**Reminder.** You can download

- Theses slides <https://bit.ly/peer-review-slides>
- A tips handout <https://bit.ly/peer-review-handout>

**Questions?**

Contact: [sarah.severson@ualberta.ca](mailto:sarah.severson@ualberta.ca) or [kshuttle@sfu.ca](mailto:kshuttle@sfu.ca)