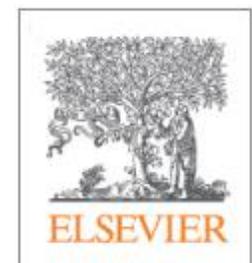


How to Review a Paper for the MMJ

Reviewer Toolkit

JANUARY 2017

Prepared by the MMJ Editorial Staff
With special thanks to Elsevier



Importance of Reviewers

The quality and integrity of the entire scientific publishing enterprise depends on the quality and integrity of the reviewers, which is why reviewers are at the heart of the scientific publishing process.

What Makes a Good Reviewer?

- Provides an objective, thorough, and comprehensive report
- Provides well-founded comments for authors
- Gives constructive criticism
- Provides a clear recommendation to the Editor
- Submits the report on time



Role and Tasks of Reviewer

- **Role of a reviewer:** to provide fair and unbiased comments on the quality and value of an article
- Peer review requires:
 - Transparency
 - Impartiality
 - Confidentiality
 - Timeliness
 - Trust
- Reviewers are asked to write reports in a timely, collegial and constructive manner
- Reviewers are asked to treat all manuscripts in the same manner

General Impression and Abstract

The **Abstract** provides an accurate summary of the manuscript, including the aims, the methods, the key results, and the relevance of the study.

- Look at the manuscript as a whole
 - What is your general impression of the manuscript?
 - What is your view of the originality of the research, the novelty, and importance to the field, and how this fits the scope of the MMJ?
 - Is the language/style/grammar and the structure of the paper acceptable?
- Is the Abstract included?
 - Is it a real summary of the paper?
 - Does it include the key results?
 - Does it contain unnecessary information?
 - Is it too long? The MMJ sets the abstract to no more than 300 words.
 - Have key words been provided and are they relevant to the scope of the MMJ?

Introduction

In the **Introduction**, the author explains the rationale behind the work. An effective Introduction should identify the purpose of the work or the hypothesis, and set it within the broader research context.

- Is it effective, clear, and well organized?
- Does it identify the purpose of the work or the hypothesis, and set it within the broader research context?
- Does it really introduce and put into perspective what follows?
- Suggest changes in organization and point authors to appropriate citations if necessary
- Be as specific as possible when giving feedback
 - Don't just write "the authors have done a poor job"

Assessing the Methodology

The **Methodology** should address two key areas: data collection and data analysis. The Methodology allows readers to judge whether or not the results obtained are valid. The reason why a particular method was used is also important since this can impact the result.



- Can a colleague reproduce the experiments and get the same outcomes?
- Is the description of new methodology complete and accurate?
- Did the authors include proper references to previously published methodology?
- Is the sample size large enough and was it selected in an appropriate way?
- Was the data collected in accordance with accepted practice?
- Could or should the authors have included supplementary material?
- Could or should the authors have included limitations to the study?

Results and Discussion (II)

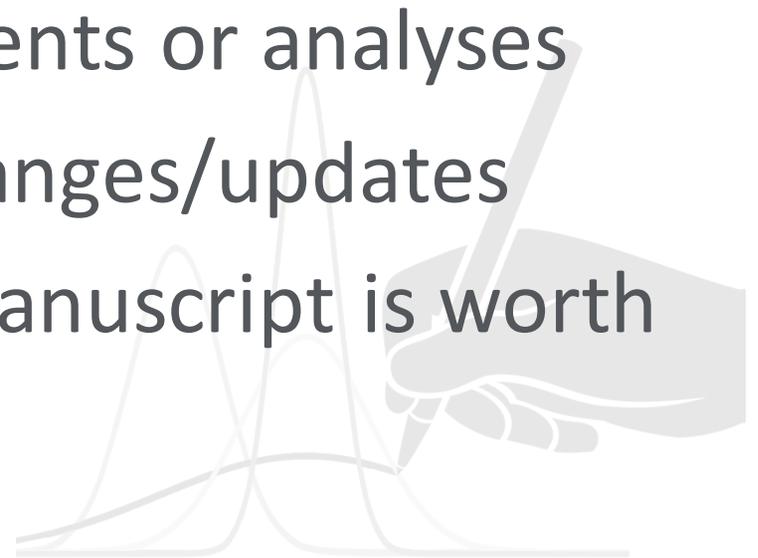
The aim of the **Results** section is to report the results without any type of subjective interpretation.

- Do the expected results occur, and have all relevant data been included?
- Do I have any questions about the data presented?
- Suggest improvements in the way data is shown
- Comment on general logic and on justification of interpretations and conclusions
- Comment on the number of figures, tables, and schemes
- Write concisely and precisely which changes you recommend

Results and Discussion (II)

In the **Discussion**, the author is expected to examine, interpret, and qualify the results obtained, and draw any inferences from them.

- List suggested style/grammar changes and other small changes separately
- Suggest additional experiments or analyses
- Make clear the need for changes/updates
- Ask yourself whether the manuscript is worth being published



Assessing the Conclusions

The purpose of the **Conclusion** is to assess the implication of the results obtained, and to put these in a broader research context.

- Comment on importance, validity, and generality of conclusions
- Request toning down of any unjustified claims and generalizations
- Request removal of redundancies and summaries
- Confirm conclusions are fully supported by the data and the analyses, arguments, and interpretation

References

- Check accuracy, number, and appropriateness of citations
- Check that references are up-to-date
- Check if there any gaps in the literature that should be addressed
- Look for any inappropriate self-citations but suggest any MMJ citations that are appropriate

Tables, Figures, Multimedia

- Comment on tables and figures (and any multimedia), and their quality, usefulness and readability
- Comment on any footnotes
- Assess completeness of legends, headers, and axis labels
- Comment on need for color in figures
- Check presentation consistency

Resources

The Elsevier Publishing Campus is an online platform offering free lectures, training and advice to support each stage of the researcher's career.

Elsevier Publishing Campus

Training. Advice. Discussion. Networking.

Packed with free online lectures and interactive courses, together with expert advice and resources to help on your way to publishing a world-class book or journal article.

College of Skills Training

Boost your publishing skills in journals and books



College of Big Ideas

Discuss trending topics in publishing and academia



College of Networking

Make the most of every opportunity



College of Research Solutions

Training for effective and efficient research skills



College of Career Planning

Get ahead in your academic career



College of Recommended Organizations

Reach your potential with support from global resources



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