



So, what is a peer reviewer looking for?

Many potential contributors may be new to peer review so to try to gain some idea of what the process entails, it may be helpful to read through these guidelines which will be used by the peer reviewers.

Manuscripts are assigned two reviewers, one of whom will ensure academic accuracy if the other does not have this experience. The reviewers do not know who the author is and the author will not know who has carried out the peer review.

There are six main steps in refereeing a paper:

1. Read the paper. Make notes in the margin to remind you of points you may wish to refer to later. Ask yourself:

- What does the title tell you about what the paper is going to be about?
- What does the introduction say the paper will be about?
- What is the purpose, problem or research question being addressed?
- What is the significance of the article? Why is it important?
- Is it clear and fairly easy to read?
- Are you convinced by the paper? Why/why not?

2. Think about what the author has tried to tell you.

- Were you convinced the author presented you with a new idea? Why/Why not?
- Having read the paper, do you 'trust' the author?
- What is the main argument within the article? How has it been developed?
- Do you know of any sources, evidence, other information or discussion of this topic that the author has not mentioned but should have?
- Does the paper sound at all familiar?
- Is the information/evidence accurate?

If it is a research paper, has the methodology been justified? Clearly outlined? Is it appropriate for the research question/hypothesis? How have the data been collected and analysed? Were the data accurately reported and analysed? Do the data support the conclusions? Do the conclusions support the original research question?

Did you find it interesting?
Why/Why not?

How does the article contribute to MRT knowledge?

3. Read the paper over again to check your impressions and focus on the way the author makes her/his case and supports the argument

- Does the introduction match up with the conclusion? That is, did the paper go where the author said it would?
- Are there any statements that don't lead to anything?
- Are there any assumptions that aren't supported by either literature or research?
- Do you still have questions about the topic or the author's intentions?
- Does it 'hang together' and form a coherent piece of writing?

4. Prepare your comments

- Is this the kind of submission that is appropriate and relevant for 'Shadows' to publish?
- Is the quality sufficiently high for it to be published in the peer review section of the Journal?
- Does the author make an adequate case for her/his thesis?
- Is the paper logical?
- Is the evidence and are the sources adequate?
- Has anything important been overlooked? Is this problem fatal

(undermines the entire paper's argument) or fairly easily remedied?

Would you like to see this paper appear in 'Shadows'?

5. Decide on your recommendation

- Can it be published the way it is now?
- If 'Yes', then recommend "Accept, as is."
- If 'No', because the paper needs minor corrections of language, fact or presentation, then recommend "Accept, with corrections."
- If 'No' because the paper needs more substantial revisions or reworking, then recommend "Accept, with revisions or substantial reworking."
- If there are some fundamental problems with the paper but the idea is good, interesting, innovative and worth the author's efforts to revise, then recommend "Possibly suitable for 'Shadows' but not in its current form."
- If the subject or topic will not appeal to readers, isn't sufficiently focused on MRT-related material or if you have any other reasons for not recommending the publication of the paper, then recommend "Unsuitable for publication."

In each of these instances you should provide whatever details you can to illustrate and explain your position. Provide constructive feedback where possible, in the form of a detailed summary, or annotated feedback on the actual paper.

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So, now you know what's involved and that it's really not that difficult, we look forward to receiving your article!