

# “Remember a condition of academic writing is that we expose ourselves to critique” – 15 steps to revising journal articles

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*Before having your paper accepted for publication in a peer reviewed journal you'll almost certainly be required to revise your manuscript at least once. But for less experienced authors this may not always feel so straightforward. **Deborah Lupton** has compiled a list of quick tips for authors who have been asked to revise their article. Remember that being exposed to critique is an inevitable part of academic writing, challenge yourself to improve your work, address all reviewer comments, and you'll be ready to resubmit.*



1. Take a deep breath. No-one likes to have their precious writing critiqued, and it can be very easy to feel defensive and annoyed. But remember a condition of academic writing is that we expose ourselves to critique. We must learn to accept this and realise how the review process can help us.
2. Feel gratitude for the work performed on your behalf by the reviewers and editors. Although you may not like some of their feedback, nearly all (and yes, there are some nasty exceptions) have reviewed your work in the spirit of academic generosity and have taken precious time from their own work to do this. If they have performed the review constructively, they deserve your thanks and appreciation.
3. See the revision process as a way to make your work the best it can be, and a challenge to push yourself to improve it.
4. If the editor has given you a decision of 'revise and resubmit', always attempt this, however extensive the work required of you. There is a very good chance that if you revise your article competently it will be accepted.

5. If the editor has rejected your article, acknowledge your inevitable feelings of disappointment and frustration (or even murderous rage!) but then move on. Think about where else you can resubmit it. Consider first the comments made by the reviewers and decide whether you should address some of these before submitting elsewhere to enhance your chances of success next time around.



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6. Bite the bullet. Try not to leave the revisions or submission to another journal too long – it can be easy to keep putting this job off, but it must be done!
7. If the article has been written with other authors, decide who will take leadership on the revisions. This should usually be the person who led the writing of the original manuscript. The lead author should take on as much of the revision work as they can, and then share the revised version with the other author(s) for their contributions and feedback.
8. Block out a good chunk of time in which you will be able to begin work on the revisions. If possible, choose a time of day at which you know you will be feeling the most mentally alert. There is no denying that you have a demanding task ahead of you.
9. Don't rush things. Take as much time as you need to complete it properly.
10. Now that you are mentally prepared ... go back and read your submitted manuscript. You will most likely have forgotten most of what you wrote and this is a good chance to read it with fresh eyes.
11. Then go back to the email from the journal editors with the reviewers' comments. Copy and paste the reviewers' comments in to a new Word document. Then go through and isolate each comment which suggests or requests a revision. Then read each comment carefully.
12. Start to go through your original manuscript and begin addressing those points you think require revisions. It is often easiest to address the minor revisions first. In your 'response to reviewers' document, write your responses under each separate point as you go. Your response should explain the changes you have made. If you disagree with a suggested change, you are entirely within your rights to state this and explain why.

13. Highlight changes in your manuscript with bold or coloured highlighting so that the editor and reviewers can easily see where you added or significantly altered material. Don't use the track changes function (unless this has been specifically requested by the editor), as track changes can leave the manuscript looking very messy and difficult to read.
14. Once you think you have conducted the revisions to the best of your ability, put the revised version aside for at least a day. Come back to it and read it through again. Read your 'response to reviewers' document again. Make any further changes you deem necessary.
15. Take another deep breath ... and resubmit your article. Good luck!

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### **About the author**

**Deborah Lupton** is Centenary Research Professor at University of Canberra. She blogs at [This Sociological Life](#) and tweets [@DALupton](#). Her latest books are *Digital Sociology* (2015, Routledge) and *The Quantified Self: A Sociology of Self-Tracking* (2016, Polity).

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