

# How to Write a (Seminar) Peer Review?

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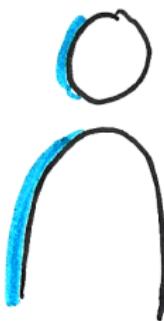
# Let's Go!

# Peer Reviews

peer review = a **review** conducted by a **peer**

- **review**: a report on a piece of work, for example a text
- **goals**: evaluate quality, help improve the work
- **peer**: authors and reviewers are on the same level
- main quality control mechanism in scientific research

# Goals



Review Author (You)

- practice critical reading
- improve your own writing
- practice giving feedback
- learn something new



Report Author

- gets feedback
- improves writing
- improves structure
- improves grade

# Get Familiar with the Report

- skim the report first
- then read the report thoroughly
- take notes while reading
  - which parts are unclear?
  - where did you get lost?
  - any gaps or missing pieces?
  - less important: typos

# Properties of Good Reviews

write the review you want to receive

- plan enough time for reading/writing
- submit **on time**
- be **constructive**
- be **detailed** and **specific**
- **justify arguments** with examples
- be **honest** but polite
- also highlight **things you liked**

# Aspects of a Review

# Aspects of a Review

- focus on different aspects
  - summary
  - clarity
  - soundness
  - scholarship
  - (relevance, novelty and significance)
  - minor comments
- consider them independently
- not a fixed structure
  - ~~ discuss more or fewer aspects if it makes sense

# Summary

## Content

- (very) short summary of the report
- use your own words
- demonstrates that you understood the text
- shows author how text was received
  - main points clear?
  - focus as intended?
  - story/structure clear?

# Clarity

## Content

- How well written is the report?
- Is the structure easy to follow?
- Is it easy to read?

- not about spelling mistakes, etc.  
~~ “Minor Comments”
  - unless there is tons of them
  - spell-check your report before submission!
- point out bad style
  - but realize that styles other than yours can be good
- be **constructive** and not aggressive

# Soundness

## Content

- Is the **formal background** complete and consistent?
- Are the **main arguments** supported sufficiently?
- Are the **proofs** correct?

- not only formal proofs but also argumentation
- consider the details but don't be too picky
  - small errors go under "Minor Comments"

# Scholarship

## Content

- Is related work sufficiently cited and discussed?
- Are the references complete and in good shape?
- Recommend [additional sources](#) if you know something the author missed
- Check the bibliography as well
  - bibtex entries copied from Google Scholar are often incomplete

# Relevance, Novelty and Significance

## Content

- How well does this fit with the conference/journal (relevance)?
- Is the presented work revolutionary or incremental (novelty)?
- How much of an impact will the results probably make (significance)?

- used to keep a conference/journal theme
- used to decide if the results are important enough to be published
- not applicable for our seminar

# Minor Comments

## Content

- catch-all group for other comments
- typos, spelling, grammar, style, . . .
- unrelated to main message of the review
- make suggestions easy to address
  - page numbers and sentence context
- be specific and constructive
- you can include an annotated version of the text for this

# Receiving a Peer Review

# How to Receive a Peer Review

When you receive a review

- be gracious even if you disagree
  - someone took the time to read your work
  - and give you feedback
- fix the problems
- if the reviewer misunderstood
  - identify where they got lost
  - improve the section to avoid this misunderstanding

be prepared and willing to make changes