

5 Effective Tips for Writing a Good Academic Rebuttal Letter

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An academic rebuttal letter can be a great chance to convince referees and editors that your paper is good and should be published in that journal. Often, it is your last opportunity to emphasize the quality of your work during the [peer review process](#). So, before writing a rebuttal letter, you should take time to examine the reviewer comments very carefully and determine the nature of the revisions that have been suggested and how you should reply to them. Also, try and be realistic, can you really address all the points raised by the referees? Will you be able to make the required improvements to your paper within a reasonable time? Often, based on the reviewer comments, you may have to conduct certain experiments and re-evaluate the data that you have provided. These five tips could help you:

Tip 1: Be Polite and Respectful

The manner in which you write the rebuttal letter can make a big difference in how editors and referees judge your revision. Before actually examining your revised paper, they will most likely read the rebuttal letter, so [if you want them to be on your side](#), you should not be too brief in your comments as it may seem disrespectful. Always remember that each reviewer that has examined your paper will read the rebuttal letter, so be equally polite to all of them and always avoid taking their comments personally. Each critique is made to improve the quality of work and is not directed towards any specific individual. Always begin by thanking the referees and editors for the time they have invested in evaluating your paper—and for the valuable comments they have provided. If the reviewers have misunderstood something, maybe it was unclear enough in the original paper, so report the misunderstanding in a respectful way and clarify any doubts. An example of such a response is as follows:

“Unfortunately, this point was not clear in our original manuscript. We would like to apologize for the misunderstanding and have now revised the paper to explain this better.”

Tip 2: Provide Point-by-Point Replies to All the Referees’ Comments

Always ensure that you have copied each [reviewer’s comment in your academic rebuttal letter](#) and a clear reply is written immediately after each point. If the comments are in the form of long paragraphs, break them into separate points so that you can address them one-by-one. To help referees and editors follow the changes you have made, it is a good idea to distinguish the comments and responses in your letter [using different fonts or text colors](#), for example:

Referee 1: Why did you use A instead of B?

Reply: We used compound A because...

Do not ignore any of the referees’ remarks. If you cannot address a particular point, you should thank the reviewer(s) for their suggestion and clearly explain why you were not able to make the change—or why that particular correction is beyond the scope of the paper (monetary or personal reasons are not accepted as an excuse). You could write:

“We thank the reviewer for this valuable suggestion and agree that it would be interesting to carry out this study. However, in this case, it is outside the scope of the paper because...”

Related: Would you like to serve as a manuscript reviewer? [Check out this post before you proceed!](#)

Always remember that editors and reviewers are usually quite busy, so it is important that your responses are clear and short. You should also make an attempt to address the referees' concerns as well as you can, but do this succinctly and directly without redundant explanations or long discourses.

Tip 3: Highlighting Changes in Your Manuscript

All the corrections that have been made should also be marked on the revised version of your paper. If you have conducted additional experiments, included new data, or added figures, tables, or attachments to the revised paper, you should clearly indicate where this information has been placed. Always provide the exact page, table, and figure numbers so that editors and referees know where to search. If necessary, provide more references or include supporting/unpublished material to support your arguments.

Tip 4: Choose the Right Ending

Your letter should end with positive and friendly sentences and should let the referees know that you have done your best to improve the manuscript according to their comments—and that you are willing to make further corrections (if necessary). Moreover, reviewers and editors should get the feeling that you value their work and the time they have invested in revising your paper. A good ending for your letter could be:

“We would like to thank the referees and editors for evaluating our manuscript. We have tried to address all the reviewers' concerns in a proper way and believe that our paper has improved considerably. We would be happy to make further corrections if necessary and look forward to hearing from you soon.”

Tip 5: Becoming a Reviewer

Now that your letter is ready, read it once more to check if you really like it. Read it from the perspective of the reviewers. Will they understand the explanations you have given? Is the text clear and precise? Is your tone friendly and respectful throughout? If your answer to all these questions is yes, then it is time to send your revised paper and the rebuttal letter to the editorial office!

Cite this article

Enago Academy, 5 Effective Tips for Writing a Good Academic Rebuttal Letter. Enago Academy. 2016/11/01. <https://www.enago.com/academy/five-tips-for-writing-a-good-rebuttal-letter/>