

Revising Manuscripts: Trying to Make Everyone Happy

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 Article Recommendations

In our past two Editorials, we discussed two aspects of the reviewing process for authors ([suggesting reviewers for a quick and efficient editorial process](#)) and for reviewers ([tips for writing a professional and useful review](#)). In this contribution, we give some advice for authors on how to address the reviewer comments so that the manuscript can be quickly (and hopefully favorably) processed.

When you submit a revised manuscript, you should provide a marked version that highlights the changes made during revision. For ACS journals, the highlighted version should be uploaded as “Supporting Information for Review Only” and be provided *in addition* to the main (unmarked) manuscript file. For the marked version of the manuscript, simply show the added text using highlighting or colored font. There is no need to indicate the text that has been deleted (the file becomes very cluttered if the deleted text is included). In addition to the manuscript files, a document that contains your response to the reviewer comments is required (see sample shown in [Figure 1](#)). For the response document, reproduce the reviewers’ comments in full. Below each comment, you should say whether you agree or disagree with the reviewer (marked by “Author Reply”), and give your reasons for agreeing/disagreeing. You should also indicate the changes made to the manuscript in response to the comment. Reproduce the text that has been added or deleted, and specify where this is in the revised manuscript (page number and paragraph number). It is a lot easier to understand this document if you use different colors for the reviewer comments, your reply, and the added and deleted text. This will allow the editors and reviewers to quickly find and assess the changes. Note that the response letter will be made available to the reviewers if the editor decides that the manuscript needs further review. If you have comments that are only for the editor, please place them in the cover letter for the manuscript.

It is important to carefully consider each comment from the reviewers and modify the manuscript to address all of the comments. The discussion of the comment should be succinct and to the point. Do not write pages of text—your message will get lost! Also, please be polite. Even if you feel the reviewer has been unreasonable, or even rude, in their comment, it is better to take the high road. Answer the comments in a professional way, and try to understand the reviewer’s point. Note, even if you are convinced that the reviewer is wrong on a particular issue, the relevant text in the manuscript most likely still needs to be adjusted to address their concerns. After all, if the reviewer is confused about something in the manuscript, it is very likely that other readers will also be confused! It is also not productive to be stubborn and refuse to make changes to the manuscript to address the reviewer comments. Occasionally, we see very detailed and well written replies to reviewer comments from

authors but no changes made to the manuscript. Clearly, it is better to incorporate the replies into the revised manuscript to make a better end product.

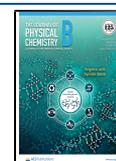
Sometimes reviewers request extra experiments or calculations. If they add value to the manuscript and they can be done in a reasonable time frame, then you should do them and include the results in either the main text or the Supporting Information. If the experiments/calculations cannot be done or you feel that they are not necessary, then explain the situation. The reviewer and/or the editor will then have to decide whether they are crucial for the manuscript. Occasionally, the requested experiments or calculations are extensive, so that significant time and effort is required. In this case, the editor may choose “Reject and Resubmit” rather than “Major Revision” for the manuscript decision. Do not treat this as a rejection and get depressed—it is an opportunity to carefully revise the manuscript and fill in the scientific gaps!

If the reviewer(s) comment that the manuscript is difficult to read, then please have it edited by a professional editing service. Information about Language Editing Services can be found at the ACS Authoring Services Web site (<https://authoringservices.acs.org/en/>). Note that services are also available for improving Figures, which is important for increasing the impact of your manuscript.

Last, take notice of and address the comments from the editorial office. These comments can cover a range of issues, from the quality of the graphics, to the formatting for the manuscript and Supporting Information, as well as scientific issues such as a proper error analysis, correct control experiments, and justification of the models and calibration of the level of theory used in the manuscript.

When an editor sends a manuscript back to an author for revision, they believe that the manuscript could be published in the journal if certain changes are made. Thus, use the revision process as an opportunity to improve your manuscript. The goal of revising the manuscript is to make everyone happy—the reviewers, the editors, the eventual readers, and yourself. Ultimately, everyone wants a final product that is as good as it can be and appropriate for the journal. This requires that you think carefully about each comment and revise the manuscript to clarify your message.

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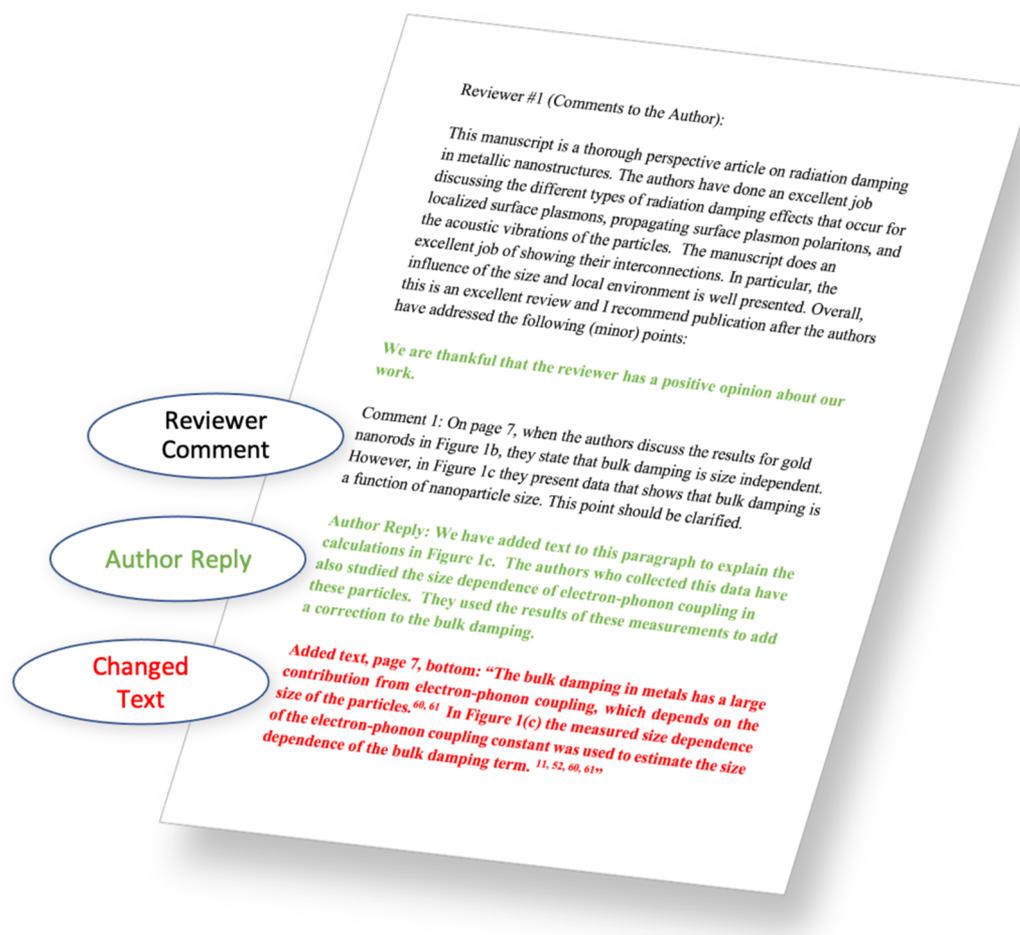


Figure 1. Prepare your response document by reproducing the reviewer comments, stating your reply, and specifying the changes made to the manuscript file. Use different colors to make this document more readable.

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Notes

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