

Section 4

Respond to Feedback

Getting feedback on something you wrote can sometimes be difficult and frustrating — even if the comments and suggestions could improve your work. In order to get the most out of the review process, use the tips on the following pages to help you choose the best way to respond to the feedback.

Some feedback will show you clear ways to improve your work. Some might be less helpful. You have to think carefully about which reviewer suggestions will really strengthen your article.

Your reviewer might suggest that you revise your text, do another literature review, or analyze your data further. Here are 4 ways to respond:

1. Make the change the reviewer recommends.

Pro: Insight from colleagues can add another view that strengthens your article.

Con: This may change the direction of your research. If you feel strongly, have a discussion with the reviewer.

2. Go back and analyze your data more.

Pro: A deeper analysis can strengthen your findings. Remember to make a connection between the data and the purpose of your article.

Con: Don't add data without a good reason. You could make your article confusing or undercut your argument. Ask yourself, "Would this new data support my thesis?" If it won't, don't add it.

3. Do a more in-depth literature review.

Pro: As your article develops, it can sometimes help to go back and review the literature. Expand your search. Ask colleagues for source recommendations.

Con: At this point, more research could really slow you down — and might not have a clear benefit. Instead, you might want to save further research for your next article.

4. Give a brief explanation about why you're not making a recommended change.

Pro: Discuss your point of view. This will help the reviewer understand your thought process.

Con: Depending on your relationship with the reviewer, she might think you're being difficult. If you're upset by the feedback, take time to calm down before you respond.

Bottom Line: It's easy to take it personally when someone comments on your work. Remind yourself that feedback can improve your article — and it will help prepare you for the peer review process.