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Responding to peer review comments

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Remember peer review is *meant* to be critical

- Almost no journal articles are accepted at the first draft stage
- Anything more than very minor revisions will go back out to the referees
- Some journals may go 4 or more rounds before a final decision
- Everybody however experienced gets considerable criticism from time to time
- You will only be asked to resubmit if the editor thinks the paper has potential

First steps

- Read what is said
- Put it away for a few days if you can, so you feel calmer
- Remember it's the paper/chapter/application they are criticizing, not you
- Ask an academic you trust to have a look at the feedback
- If asked to comment or rewrite, work through comments systematically
- Prepare your response or rewritten paper, get someone to read it before sending it

Responding to comments on papers/chapters

- If it's a journal article or book chapter, start your response with brief notes on how you have addressed the criticisms and where in the text (give page numbers) you have done so
- If there is a comment or comments you disagree with or find impossible to comply with (eg collect new data), briefly explain your argument
- Always remain polite – if you are aggressive it can make the editor or reviewers cross which is unhelpful to your cause
- Double check that you haven't left any third party track changes in the paper

Responding to comments on grants

- If you get the right of reply remain calm and professional
- You will only get a short time to respond so don't be late replying
- There may be a word limit, so if there is, stick to it
- Don't give the impression you think the evaluator is stupid or misguided
- Deal with each point in turn
- If something seems to have been missed by the reviewer, simply say that you made this point on page X and maybe elaborate a little