

Thoughts on Writing a Peer Review the *Voice and Speech Review*

Steps to writing a peer review:

1) **Read the article.**

2) **Decide one of the following:** a) Accept without changes, b) Accept with changes, c) Reject

If you feel the article can be accepted without changes, then that is fine. Since many VSR articles go through a detailed editing process with an Associate Editor and the Editor, then some articles *are* accepted without changes. Many reviewers feel that they are required to find some “fault” in the article, and that’s not necessarily the case. Nevertheless, do be honest and do not hesitate to recommend changes if you feel changes are needed. We’ve asked for your expertise as a peer reviewer, so please offer it.

3) **Write a few paragraphs offering your peer review.** Average peer reviews are anywhere from 300 to 1,000 words. You may write more, of course, if you feel it necessary, but you are welcome to be succinct.

Here are ideas for your review:

A) **Write out your major evaluations of the article.** When doing a peer review, you usually begin with the larger issues and end with minutiae. Here are some major areas of criticism to consider. You do NOT need to address each of these issues; rather the following is merely a list of helpful ideas:

- Is the article well-organized?
- Does the article contain all of the components you would expect (Introduction, Methods, Theory, Analysis, etc)?
- Are the sections well-developed?
- Does the author successfully synthesize the literature?
- Does the author answer the questions they set out to answer?
- Is the methodology clearly explained?
- Does the theory connect to the data?
- Is the article well-written and easy to understand?
- Are you convinced by the author’s results? Why or why not?

Note: Be mindful of the kind of article that has been submitted. Peer-reviewed articles are typically (a) original research articles that use qualitative and quantitative methods, or both, (b) theory articles that look at a topic or problem through a specific critical lens, or (c) literature review articles that investigate a topic through an analysis of research literature. Additionally, the VSR is a multidisciplinary journal that accepts articles from a wide body of scholars and fields. So be sure that you offer thoughts that fit the article’s scope and objective.

B) **Write out any minor issues in the article.** Once you have laid out the pros and cons of the article, it is perfectly acceptable (and welcome) for you to point out that the table on page 3 is mislabeled, that the author wrote “compliment” instead of “complement” on page 7, or other minutiae. Correcting those minor errors will make the author’s paper look more professional if it goes out for another peer review, and certainly will have to be corrected before being accepted for publication. Do not use Word Track Changes since the author can see your name; write your response on a separate document.

4) **Review.** Go over your review and make sure that it makes sense and that you are communicating your critiques and suggestions in as helpful a way as possible.

Finally, when writing a review, be mindful that you are critiquing the article in question – not the author. Thus, make sure your critiques are constructive. For example, it is not appropriate to write: “The author clearly has not read any Foucault.” Instead, say: “The analysis of Foucault is not as developed as I would expect to see in an academic journal article.” Also, be careful not to write: “The author is a poor writer.” Instead, you can say: “This article would benefit from a close editing. I found it difficult to follow the author’s argument due to the many stylistic and grammatical errors.” Although you are an anonymous reviewer, please be truthful, professional, and kind. As a journal that predominately focuses on the performing arts, many VSR authors are artist-scholars (not necessarily full-time researchers), and typically at least a few VSR articles each year are from authors who are publishing for the first time. The mission of the VSR is to be both academically rigorous and supportive to authors in the voice community.

Note: This guide has been adapted from Dr. Tanya Golash-Boza’s article. For the full article, see: <https://tinyurl.com/y9foxqeb>