



## Instructions for Blind Reviews

### Purposes for Blind Reviews

In general, academic and professional journals employ blind reviews for four key reasons:

1. To determine if the papers submitted to the journal are of sufficient quality, relevance, and currency to merit publication;
2. To minimize any biases that might be caused by the author's gender, culture, or stature within the professional community;
3. To ensure that articles are factually accurate and employ the standard methods that are accepted within the community;
4. To provide the authors with feedback that will assist them with making any needed changes in content, organization, and style.

### Method for the Blind Reviews

1. Carefully read over the sample article and "Instructions to Authors" (if any) with which you are provided. This sample identifies the journal to which the author might submit the paper. As you are reading the article, generally note the level of expertise assumed for the audience, the format that is expected for the submission (if indicated), the rhetorical purpose, and the style that is employed. If you are uncertain about how to analyze the sample, read Section 6.8 (pp. 240-241) and Section 7.6 (pp. 287-288) in *Strategies for Engineering Communication*.
2. Read through the paper that you are reviewing and note any initial reactions you have to the content, organization, format, and purpose (persuasive, informative, etc.). Write down those initial reactions on a separate sheet of paper, but don't suggest any specific changes at this time. I also recommend that you *do not* respond to any issues of style or correctness that you happen to see during this initial reading.
3. Read through the paper a second time and examine carefully the style employed. If you find any of the stylistic flaws noted on the next page, circle a few instances of the flaw and make the appropriate change. Make these changes on the paper you are reviewing. Note that you should not edit and correct every problem with the paper; instead, you should identify *patterns* of stylistic flaws or grammatical errors, and then point out as well as "correct" a few examples of them for the author.
4. On a separate sheet of paper, summarize any stylistic problems you discovered and recommend appropriate changes in light of your analysis of the sample journal article, your initial reading, and your more detailed stylistic analysis. Please note that your summary should not be overly critical in tone because the author also needs positive feedback about the elements of the paper that work well and should, therefore, not be changed. Also note that you may discover certain stylistic flaws in the paper that you are reviewing, but may feel that these flaws need not be addressed by the author in the rewrite because the sample article employs a similar style (e.g., use of the passive voice and/or nominalizations). If this is the case, note that in your summary. Use some judgment here.

## Stylistic Flaws You Should Note

As well as making general comments about the content, organization, format, and rhetorical purpose of the paper you are reviewing, you are expected to analyze the style of the paper in detail. In particular, you should look for the following stylistic flaws (please read pages 194-240 of *Strategies for Engineering Communication* for definitions and examples):

<b>Order Problems</b>	Weak endings	(pp. 195-196)
	Embedding of large phrases and clauses	(pp. 196-197)
	Weak sentence openers	(pp. 198-199)
	Passive constructions	(pp. 199-202)
<b>Connection Problems</b>	Lack of (or inappropriate) repetition	(pp. 203-204)
	Faulty parallel structure	(pp. 204-206)
	Vague <i>this</i> subjects	(pp. 206-208)
	Lack of (or inappropriate) transitional tags	(pp. 208-212)
<b>Clarity Problems</b>	Excessively long or short sentences	(pp. 212-214)
	General language	(pp. 214-215)
	Misuse of acronyms	(pp. 217-218)
	Lengthy noun strings	(pp. 218-221)
	Strings of prepositional phrases	(pp. 221-223)
	Punctuation flaws	(pp. 223-4, 234-40)
<b>Conciseness Problems</b>	Inappropriate nominalizations	(pp. 225-229)
	Dependence upon talkie verbs	(pp. 229-232)
	Wordy phrases	(pp. 232-234)

In addition to these specific issues of style, you are encouraged to note any other stylistic and grammatical problems that you find in the paper.