

FREE TEMPLATE / FOR A REVISE AND RESUBMIT

The reviewer rebuttal template. Respond without getting rejected on round two.

A revise and resubmit is a door held open. Round two is where it is won or lost. This is the response to reviewers structure I use, with the exact language for conceding, pushing back, and staying in control of the paper.

R1 → R2

3 reviewers · 11 comments · 0 unaddressed

REVIEWER 2, COMMENT 2.3

The novelty over reference [12] is not clear, and the gain looks within noise.

RESPONSE 2.3

We thank the reviewer. We now contrast with [12] in Section 3.2 and report significance across five seeds ($p < 0.01$) in Table 4.

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50+ peer reviews

Published in IEEE and Springer

Most revise and resubmit decisions that answer every comment, clearly and calmly, get accepted. The paper rarely fails on the science at this stage. It fails on the response.

01 Before you type a word

- **Read a revise and resubmit as an invitation.** The editor is telling you the paper is worth saving. Act like it.
- **Answer every single comment.** Silence on a point reads as a dodge and gives the reviewer a reason to hold the line.
- **Concede the cheap ones fast.** Fix the small asks without argument. Spend your capital only where the science needs it.
- **Never argue with the decision.** You argue, politely, with one specific technical point at a time. Never with the editor's call or the reviewer's tone.

02 The two parts of a response

A **A short letter to the editor.** Thank them, summarize the main changes in three or four lines, and point to the detailed responses below. Keep it calm and brief.

B **A point-by-point response.** Every comment quoted, answered, and located in the revised paper. This is where the decision is actually made.

03 Answer every comment the same way

- 1 **Quote the comment verbatim, numbered.** R1.1, R1.2, R2.1. The reviewer should find their words instantly.
- 2 **State what you did in one past-tense sentence.** "We have added." "We have clarified." "We have rerun." Action first.
- 3 **Show it.** Quote the new text, or name the figure, table, section, and page. Never make them search.
- 4 **If you disagree, give evidence, then offer a step.** Explain the choice, back it with data, and still add something. Pure refusal loses.

04 The phrase bank

WHEN YOU AGREE

"We thank the reviewer and agree. We have [change] in Section X, page Y."

WHEN YOU PARTLY AGREE

"We take this point. We have [smaller change], and we explain in Section X why [the rest] falls outside the present study."

WHEN YOU DISAGREE, POLITELY

"We understand the concern. We chose [X] because [evidence]. To address it directly, we have added [analysis] in Section X, which supports the original choice."

WHEN IT IS OUT OF SCOPE

"This is a valuable direction. It sits beyond the scope of this paper, and we now name it as future work in Section X."

05 Mistakes that trigger a second rejection

- **Answering some comments and quietly skipping others.** The one you skip is the one they remember.
- **A defensive tone.** Arguing the decision, or the reviewer, instead of the specific point.
- **"We changed it" with no location.** If they cannot see the change, it did not happen.
- **New claims with no new evidence.** Every added sentence in the rebuttal needs the same backing as the paper.
- **A response longer than it needs to be.** Clear and complete beats long. Respect their time.



A revise and resubmit is a door held open. *Answer every knock, show your work, and keep your tone even. That is how round two is won.*

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