PHYS 496—Spring 2023

Homework Assignment #6, Peer-Reviewing

The purpose of this assignment is to practice writing a peer review for a scientific article. The reviews will be done anonymously; please maintain the confidentiality of the review process. Your colleagues will be most helped by reviews that are specific, detailed, and objective. Be critical, but express your criticisms in a positive, nonjudgmental way. Strive for the "golden rule" for reviewers—"Review unto others as you would have them review unto you." Your anonymous reports will be made available to the authors but will not affect their grades on HW #6.

Before beginning your referee reports, please review "Introduction to refereeing" from the Institute of Physics (UK) and the grading rubric for the assignment.

For the assignment, you'll be given copies of two of your colleagues' general-audience articles. For each article, you will write a one-page evaluation of the article. Do ***not*** simply edit the document as we do in Writing Workshop; write a *narrative* report, using the information you learned in the class lecture. Address your remarks to the "editor" and remember to point out strengths as well as weaknesses and mistakes. Finally explicitly tell the editor whether the paper may be published as is, published with suggested revisions, published with mandatory revisions, or rejected outright.

Your review should incorporate the following elements:

1. A summary of the main ideas presented in the article. (Shows the author that you've actually read the paper!)
2. An assessment of the extent to which a member of the general public would understand and be interested in the report. (Is the article written at an appropriate level—language, concepts—for the intended audience?)
3. A comment on the effectiveness of the article's title for the intended audience. Could the title be improved?
4. An evaluation of the (at least) four hyperlinks. (Do they present useful supplementary material consistent with the level of expertise of expected readers? Are they embedded in the text? Do they work?)
5. An evaluation of the figures and captions. (Do they clearly communicate and enhance the main ideas of the article? Will they be understandable to the intended audience? Is the source of each figure given? Do the captions point out important features and explain them? Are all elements of the figure addressed in the caption?)
6. An evaluation of the correctness of the physics explanations. Point out errors and omissions.
7. An evaluation of how well the author adhered to the author instructions.
8. Specific suggestions for how the author might improve the article.
9. Specific recommendation for or against publishing the article.

Be specific! Back up your opinions with examples. Point out where language is ambiguous or unclear.

Be collegial and constructive! Do not make personal comments; criticize the article, not the author.

Due: **Friday, Mar 3, 9:00 p.m.** Upload your assignment to my.physics. Late assignments will have points deducted and will cause your reviewers unnecessary stress. This assignment is not eligible for rewrite points.

Total—100 points (50 points for each review)