Paper Assignments and Peerceptiv in ASTR/PHYS 109

Instructions Spring 2020

Writing your papers, submitting them, and doing the rest of the stages in Peerceptiv

This document has 5 sections. They are
1. Introduction and Getting Technical Help
2. Assignment Workflow, and Getting Help Writing Better Papers
3. Grading
4. Misgrades, Regrades and Revisions
5. Examples of Good Papers, Reviews and Back-Evaluation Feedback

1. Introduction

One of the primary goals of this course is to be able to effectively communicate the answers to important scientific questions to a lay audience. Since employers often identify communication skills as the most important characteristics of a prospective employee immediately following graduation from college we want you to have practiced the methods that the people in the real world have that make them successful. In particular, this means writing drafts of your paper, giving feedback to others on their writing, incorporating feedback into your own writing and iterating the text until it is excellent. Learning to write well requires regular practice and feedback. The Paper Assignments and the computer assignment procedures we will use are designed to achieve both goals. Since the particular type of writing in this class may be new to you, Section 5.1 in this document contains an example paper outline for your use.

In this class, we will be using a web-based program in eCampus, called Peerceptiv¹. We will be allowing Revisions, if wanted or needed, more on that below. which is designed to allow you to do multiple submissions if needed or desired. With it you'll get regular practice and feedback, even in our large class; at the same time you will gain the critical evaluation and iteration skills that employers want. A quick link on how to navigate within eCampus to do Peerceptiv stuff can be found at
http://people.physics.tamu.edu/toback/109/WritingAssignments/Peerceptiv_HowTo.mov

There are three stages to each assignment:
1) Writing Stage (Submit to Peerceptiv AND to TurnItIn)
2) Review Stage and
3) Back-evaluation Stage.

Each are described in the next section. There are some important notes:

● Your grade is determined by the Writing Stage score, but you only get that score if you pass the Reviewer and Back-evaluation stages.

¹ Some people in the class may have already used Peerceptiv in others classes. If you have, be aware that we are using the version known as the Asynchronous Version, which debuted in spring 2020
• You will have to enter the system at least twice (well separated in time). Mostly this allows others to have time to review your text. In principle, you can progress to the next step immediately if the materials are available to you.
• We will allow revisions of the text portion to help you improve your grades, but you will need to re-do all three stages of the assignment if you choose to revise and resubmit the text portion. The assumption here is that you use the comments from the previous iteration to make it better.
• If you do not pass the Review phase, you will keep working on it until you Pass.

1.2 Getting Technical Help
• Having trouble navigating Peerceptiv, go to http://people.physics.tamu.edu/toback/109/WritingAssignments/Peerceptiv_HowTo.mov
• Having trouble with eCampus or Peerceptiv, go to http://people.physics.tamu.edu/toback/109/eCampusTechnicalProblems.shtml
• Having trouble with TurnItIn? Go to http://people.physics.tamu.edu/toback/109/WritingAssignments/InstructionsforTurnitin.shtml
2 Assignment Workflow
There are a total of four papers that will be assigned throughout the semester, and you will need at least two sittings to complete all the stages of the assignment as others in the class are involved. We note at the outset that for each assignment you will have to submit a copy of your text into TurnItIn on eCampus, and do all parts of the Peerceptiv assignment. Note that not submitting to TurnItIn may shut off your ability to do later stages in Peerceptiv until it is submitted there as well. The Peerceptiv portion can be found in the eCampus folder labeled “Peerceptiv” on the Home Page. We describe the Writing Stage, Review Stage and Back-Evaluation Stage, all of which are done in Peerceptiv, in more detail next. Submitting a Rough Draft for Feedback before submitting is optional (described in Section 2.1.2).

2.1. Writing Stage
Within Peerceptiv you will find a description of the topic, along with important guideline information as well as helpful tips. Be sure to read this information for specifics before beginning your paper.

2.1.1 Important Notes about the Writing Stage
There are a number of things to note about the Writing Stage. Some things are required and some are optional for the Writing Stage.
1. You will be graded on the quality of the draft you submit to Peerceptiv, but only if you pass the Reviews and Back-Evaluations, your Final Draft.
2. A good example outline is given in Section 5.1 of this document.
3. You will need to submit your final draft to both Peerceptiv and TurnItIn. The Peerceptiv version will be graded for use in your final grade. The TurnItIn version will be checked for evidence of plagiarism.
4. Do NOT put your name on your paper.
5. After you have submitted your document you may immediately request documents for Review. Note that there may not be a full set available to you. More on this below. In this case you will be told that you will be sent an email when one is ready. You must do the Review within two days of being assigned one or your attempt will be marked as failing and will have to restart the assignment with a new attempt.
6. If you want feedback on a draft of your paper, before submitting your paper to Peerceptiv, you must submit it early by following the instructions in Section 2.1.2.

2.1.2 Getting Help Writing a Better Paper/Submitting a Rough Draft for Feedback
There is a lot of help for paper writing in this class, both from TA's as well as the Writing Center.
- We have tried to give some good writing tips at http://people.physics.tamu.edu/toback/109/WritingAssignments/WritingTips.pdf
- Since we believe in getting feedback and iteratively improving your paper is really important before you submit your Final Draft, we have set things up so that you can get feedback from the TA's about your paper before officially submitting it, typically 3 days before it is due. You can submit a Rough Draft of your paper to the the "Rough Drafts (Optional)" folder in TurnItIn (on eCampus). Your feedback will appear in the same Folder following the instructions on.
2.1.2 Where to turn in your Paper/Plagiarism

- You must turn in any Final Drafts into both Peerceptiv and Turnitin. TurnItIn is used to check for evidence of plagiarism. Both systems can be found in eCampus. For more information go to http://faculty.physics.tamu.edu/toback/109/WritingAssignments/InstructionsforTurnitin.shtml. There are points penalties for not doing this part of the assignment. More on how to turn in a Revision below.
- Plagiarism is taken VERY seriously in this class. We do not want to expel people from A&M but have in the past. We hope not to do it again. Our rules can be found at http://faculty.physics.tamu.edu/toback/109/WritingAssignments/plagiarism.shtml.
- If you submit a Rough draft to TurnItIn for feedback, you will need to submit the Final Draft to the Final Draft folder as well, even if they are identical. If you submit a second submission Revision for the same assignment, that will need to go into TurnItIn Revision Folder for the same assignment since the system doesn’t know if it has changed or not.

2.2 Review Stage

The Review Stage starts as soon as you request a text to Review. You can do this directly after submitting your paper (although you will have to wait until others have reviewed your paper to start Back-evaluations), or you can do your Reviews and Back-evaluations in a single sitting. After requesting your first paper to Review you will be given the text of one of your peers and asked to evaluate the quality of their text. In some ways this is difficult, and in some ways it is much easier than it sounds. We have worked hard to simplify the process. As noted above, there may not be a full set of papers for you to Review when you request them. In this case you will be told that you will be sent an email when one is ready. You must do the Review within two days of getting it or your attempt will be marked as failing and you will have to start anew by submitting a paper (it can be the same paper). You must do the Review within 72 hours of it being assigned. If you do not, the system will automatically give you a zero for the attempt. The only way to get that zero removed will be to contact the instructor who can re-open it for you. You will have to completely restart the assignment. You can use the same paper, although we encourage taking the time to revise it.

When you get your first paper to review you will slowly and carefully read and critique the paper, and then do two separate review stages, one where you comment, and one where you give numeric scores. The comments and number you leave are designed to be helpful to the author you are reviewing. You want to both explain why you picked your scores, as well as give helpful thoughts on how they can make their paper better. Some good and bad examples are given in Section 5.2 of this document. More on the two sections:

1. A comments section, or your written review, should be at least a paragraph. While it can be more it does not need to be. Make specific comments both on what the paper did well and what it didn’t do well. Also include helpful suggestions on how to make it better.
a. We note that since you start with feedback, it will seem weird that you are asked about what value you will give in the later section. It may help to open the number entering stage, and then come back to the text of your feedback stage. To do this you have to enter SOMETHING into the comment box (in principle, you can put in a single letter and come back to it later, but you do need to put in SOMETHING). Some people find it easier to do the second stage first. That’s just fine.

b. Whatever you choose, we encourage you to go back and revise both until the combined set of parts are excellent.

c. Note that you can edit your Review multiple times before submitting, but you cannot go back and edit a Review after it has been submitted.

2. You will be given a menu to enter in your numeric assessment of how well the writer completed each of the tasks, along with the standards for evaluation. Specifically, you will be asked to rate the Paper on a given a set of questions (called dimensions) by indicating on a scale from 1-7 for each question (using a drop-down box) indicating how well it meets the criteria. In all cases 7 is best and 1 is worst.

In order to pass the Review phase you will need to complete three Reviews with a passing score. You will do them one at a time and the option to open the next one will open when you have completed working on it. You will typically have two days to do this portion of the assignment. Some notes:

- Take your time -whether you pass this stage will depend on how accurate your review is. You are not to use your own personal standards. Use the standards given in the class. Don’t “help” people by giving them grades that are too high (or “raise the standards of the class” by giving them low grades to help them write better). If you do that, you will be flagged as an unfair grader, your Reviews will be mostly ignored and you will fail this portion of the assignment.

- All reviews are done anonymously, so be sure to leave honest feedback that is helpful to the writer.

- Note: Be VERY careful about giving all 7’s as part of your Review. The system is specifically on the lookout for evidence that you did your Review too quickly or not carefully enough. If it finds such evidence, you will be given a failing grade. If you are going to do this, explain carefully and in detail why you did so.

2.3 Back-Evaluation Stage

The Back-evaluation Stage can begin after others have Reviewed your paper. We describe two different parts: 1) what you will be doing, and 2) how quickly you need to do it.

2.3.1 How to do Back-Evaluations

In the Back-evaluation Stage you will give feedback to your reviewers. Specifically, when you go into Peerceptiv, you will be asked some specific questions and asked to describe how HELPFUL you thought of the feedback/reviews you were given on your paper were. This is designed so that the Reviewer (you in the previous section) can see how helpful their reviews were. This will help them give better feedback next time (which will help them improve their grades). Some notes:
1. Remember, you are NOT being asked whether you agree with the comments in the Review. Regardless of whether you agree this is your time to provide feedback on how constructive/helpful it is. You are not to give bad grades based on whether you disagree with them, or if they give you a low score. If you disagree with their scores, that is to be taken up separately with the instructors.

2. Some good and bad examples are given in Section 5.3 of this document.

2.3.1 When are Back-Evaluations Due
One the one hand, since you can only do Back-Evaluations after others have Reviewed your paper, you will not be able to do your entire assignment in a single sitting. In fact, they may not all come at the same time. On the other hand, you must Back-Evaluate all 3 Reviews in order to get a grade for the assignment within 72 hours of the Review of your Paper being completed. You will be notified when you have a back-evaluation available. If it is not completed within the 72 hours you will get a zero for the assignment and you will have to completely restart the assignment. You can use the same paper, although we encourage taking the time to revise it. At that point, you have 72 hours from the notification being sent to complete the Back-evaluation. Not completing it within 72 hours could cause you to fail the Back-evaluation portion and you have to re-start the assignment.

Some examples will be helpful. For example, if one of your peers reviews your paper at 5:30 on Monday, you have until 5:30 on Thursday to complete your Back-Evaluation of that Review. And if another classmate reviews your paper on Tuesday at 6:30, you have until Friday at 6:30 to complete the Back-Evaluation corresponding to that review. To be clear, this does not mean that all three back-evaluations must be completed within 72 hours of your paper's submission, but rather within 72 hours of each Review. This is why we encourage you, when it is your turn to be the Reviewer to promptly and excellently do your Reviews since your fellow students are counting on you, and cannot get a grade until you have completed your part.

3. Grading
The big picture is that you only get your grade based on the text portion, but you are required to pass both the Reviews and Back-Evaluation Stages. We note at the outset that your score for the paper will only show up in the eCampus gradebook, and the information in the Peerceptiv system is designed only to give some of the details.

Since we are doing more than just writing papers, the grade is based on more than just the text of the paper itself. Since it’s a little sophisticated, it is worth describing it, and then we will give you instructions about what to do if you think you were misgraded and/or want a re-grade. Note that all the portions are curved so it’s not as easy as you’d like to understand how your grade is calculated.

3.1 Understanding the Peerceptiv Information
Peerceptiv gives grades based on the peer scorings of your paper, but only if you pass the Review and Back-evaluation stage. The first screen shot shows how to get your information for each assignment. Here you simply click on the “View Assignment” button.

After that you will come to the following screen where you will click on “View Results”.

You will then get a screen that looks like this:
The top part indicates that you have completed the assignment, and in this case that the student passed the Reviews and Back-evaluation stages. Since, in this assignment, there were only two rubric questions, only two scores are shown. The blue region shows the average of the weighted Reviewer scores (their scores, weighted by how good a Reviewer they are), but rounded to the nearest integer score.

Again, your grade (which takes into account the non-rounded numbers) is given in the eCampus grade book. It is important to note that the curve for the papers can change over time so your score might change a little over the course of the semester. The grades can also change as we fix papers that were incorrectly reviewed (which can affect a Revier weighting).

3.1.1 Comments on the Task Completion Check Box
This one is simple. You get a check if you have submitted your paper, done three Reviews and done three Back-evaluations.

3.1.2 Comments on the Reviewing Quality Check Box
In order to meet the Reviewing Quality Check Box, you need to pass both parts of Reviewing you did. This means 1) your ratings need to be as accurate as possible and 2) your comments need to be as helpful
as possible. If your ratings are generally accurate (i.e., similar to what your instructor would assign) and your comments are helpful based on the back-evaluation feedback, you will meet this threshold. While we wish we could be more specific, unfortunately, there is a LOT of detail and calculations that go on behind the scenes to determine whether your Reviewing Quality was above the threshold to pass. Luckily, if you don’t pass you simply will be given more Reviews to do and sent an email to do them as soon as possible. If you do them and pass within the 72 hours of receiving the email you can pass the assignment. If you do not do them within the 72 hours, you will have to start the assignment again. If you fail a second time, you will keep iterating until you pass.

3.1.3 Comments on Overall Threshold Check Box
This is the overall decision about your whether you have passed the assignment. A check in the above two boxes will produce a check here. An X in either will produce an X here.

3.2 Regrades
If you are unhappy with your grade, there are two things to know. The first is that if you feel you were graded unfairly on any part, you are encouraged to send us an email explaining your case. More on how to submit a request for regrades can be found in Section 4 of this document. The second is that if you just didn’t do well on the paper, and want to do better, you are encouraged to submit a revision of your paper (incorporating the feedback you got on the original). More on that in Section 3.4.

3.3 Late Assignments:
The system is designed to be asynchronous in that you are allowed to move as quickly as you like in principle (assuming others have done their work so you can do yours), but does require you to do your Reviews and Back-Evaluations in a timely manner. If you do not, your entry from the system will be removed and you will have to Restart Submission. This is described below.

3.4 Revisions and Other Restarting Procedures:
To do a Revision or Restart your Submission if it times out, you follow the same procedure which is to start a new Submission. We note that we accept and encourage timely revisions of the text. To do so, use the following steps:

1. For a Revision or other Restarting, you should use the feedback in Peerceptiv to improve your paper. You might want to make a copy of it because when you submit a Revision it will get lost.
2. (New: 3/26/2020) The procedure is to go into your Peerceptiv assignment and click View Results, Scroll to the bottom of the page and click Restart Assignment. You will then need to submit your revised document, and do the full set of Stages as if you were starting the assignment from the very beginning. The 72 hour requirements will again be in effect.
3. If you are doing a Revision, you will ALSO need to submit to TurnItIn (there is a separate Revision place for each paper)

To submit a Revision, it will need to be re-opened in Peerceptiv for you. To get this done, send an email to both support@peerceptiv.zendesk.com and 109help@physics.tamu.edu
When it is opened for you, you need to submit to Peerceptiv. Note that you will ALSO need to submit to TurnItIn (there is a separate Revision place for each paper). After your Revision is Submitted to Peerceptiv, you will need to do all the Stages of the Assignment as if you were doing it for the first time.

4. Mis-grades and Regrades
It is very important to us that everyone gets the grade they deserve. If you believe you were misgraded, please help us help you. To do this send an email to 109help@physics.tamu.edu with the following information using the example format:

- **Basic information:**
  - Which Paper number?
  - Give us the scores the reviewers gave and the feedback they provided. This can be found in the Assignment Overview screen, and click on “View Reviews on your Doc”. Note that you will only be given average of the Peer Review Average (which takes into account the scores from each Reviewer, as well as how good a Reviewer they are, and rounded).

- **Your concern:**
  - What was the problem? Examples include: specific Rubric numbers and average review scores that you disagree with, or Back-Evaluation helpfulness scores you disagree with.
  - For each rubric question you disagree with, tell us WHY you disagree, and point to specific examples and quotes from your paper as evidence to support your claim. To get to what the actual Rubric questions are, go to the Assignment Overview screen, and click on the Rubric tab.
  - For your Back-evaluation helpfulness scores, go to the Assignment Overview screen, and click on the Compare Reviews button. To see the comments on why you got that helpfulness score, click on the “View Reviews by You and Others” button.

4.1 Example Paper Regrade Request
Here is a draft of an excellent email to send for a Paper Regrade Request:
I am requesting a regrade for Paper 1 on the Evidence for Dark Matter

For Rubric #10: I got an average Reviewer Score of a 1/7. Reviewers 2 and 3 both said I never explained what dark matter is. While I agree it is not as clear as it could have been, it is definitely defined and I believe the grading to be too harsh. Here’s what I wrote in paragraph 3. [Quote]

For Rubric #13: I got an average Reviewer score of a 3/7 which surprised me because Reviewers 1 and 3 said I did a good job of describing how the planets orbit the Sun, but Reviewer 2 said I didn’t mention it at all. I definitely mentioned it. Here’s what I wrote in paragraph 2. [Quote]

5. Examples of Good Papers, Reviews and Back-Evaluation Feedback
Here we provide an example outline for papers (Section 5.1), good and bad examples of feedback to leave during the Review Stage (Section 5.2) and good and bad examples of back-evaluation feedback to leave during the Back-evaluation Stage (Section 5.3)

5.1 Example Document Outline:
Each paper should be about 2 pages long, double spaced. This is about ~600 words (anywhere between 450 and 1,000 is fine). You should be answering the paper topic question to someone who isn’t taking the class (no jargon). No citations! Use your own words (do not cite the book or anything else) and be careful not to use phrases from the book (TurnItIn will notice those). Only use information from the book; no extra information from the web should be added. The text should be professional. You are a “trusted guide,” not a “buddy” or “comedian.” We don’t need history, or want history. Just the evidence. Make sure you don’t have your name on your paper.

There are many ways to write a good paper for this class. Unfortunately, there are even more ways to write a bad one so we are requiring you to use a specific format that we know works. You will be graded on your ability to follow the required structure for the papers. Let's say the topic is "What is the evidence for the Big Bang?" A typical 2 page paper would have 5 or 6 paragraphs. Let's do an example with 5.

- Paragraph 1: Introduction
  - This is like the opening statements from a lawyer in a trial court case.
  - Include a topic sentence making it clear what question you are answering. For example, be explicit that that you are providing evidence that the universe started with a Big Bang.
○ Make sure you outline the pieces of evidence and other talking points mentioned in the Peerceptiv prompt, and give a sense of how these pieces of evidence will tie together. For example, "There are three primary pieces of evidence for the big bang theory. They are Reason 1, Reason 2 and Reason 3."

● Paragraph 2: Reason/Talking Point 1
  ○ The evidence paragraphs are like the main part of the trial where you show data, interview witnesses or experts.
  ○ The topic sentence should say what reason 1 is, and the rest of the paragraph should explain more about Reason 1 and why it is important. Said differently, the paragraph should explain HOW it provides evidence.
  ○ One of the questions people ask is “Am I giving too much detail here?” That’s a good question. If you were reading the paper to someone and they start to lose interest, that’s a good sign you have too much detail. If they don’t know WHY you are including the detail, then maybe it’s too much detail or your introduction didn’t make it clear why that detail is important.

● Paragraph 3: Reason/Talking Point 2
  ○ The topic sentence should say what Reason 2 is, and the rest of the paragraph should explain more about Reason 2, how it provides evidence and why it is important.

● Paragraph 4: Reason/Talking Point 3
  ○ The topic sentence should say what Reason 3 is, and the rest of the paragraph should explain more about Reason 3, how it provides evidence and why it is important.
  ○ Another good check, especially in this paragraph, is whether you are doing a “reveal” type of buildup for your conclusion. While this might be fun to write, or feel dramatic (and therefore potentially good or effective), for this paper it is a bad way to write. If your introduction is well written there should be no surprises.

● Paragraph 5: Conclusion
  ○ This paragraph is like the concluding arguments a lawyer might make in trial court case. This paragraph should summarize the pieces of evidence and the argument, and how they tie together to make a compelling argument and answer the question. Simply restating the evidence is almost never enough to be helpful.
  ○ The same comment about doing a “reveal”, as discussed above for Paragraph 4, is especially relevant here. There should be nothing surprising in the conclusion. If your reader says “ahh… now I see how it all ties together at a deeper level,” that’s a very good sign.

We want to be extra explicit: Not each paper has three pieces of evidence/talking points or should have three middle paragraphs. Additionally, you don't need to put 1 piece of evidence/talking point into each paragraph. However, the middle paragraphs need to be evidence/talking point paragraphs. The introduction will list the evidence/talking points to be discussed, and the conclusion will tie together the pieces of evidence/talking points. How many paragraphs are in-between them depends on how you tell the story.
5.2 Example Review Comments:
Reviews help highlight excellent parts of the paper and provide an outlet for constructive feedback for improvements. We next give some examples for both giving fair set of grading scores (according to the standards of the course) as well as written comments:

5.2.2: Notes on giving grading scores:
While each dimension question has its own criteria, your job is to balance two ideas in giving a numeric score 1) you are scoring for the main concept of the rubric question, 2) what specific things the rubric question is actually asking for. For example, some papers may not explicitly state the key point or may incorrectly incorporate the concept. However, this does not mean that the paper failed to incorporate that concept and they should receive a 1. Since the paper did attempt to include the relevant concept, you should use the full scale to say how well they did it. Some suggestions on how to grade in this case:

- 1 - if they did not mention something at all/did not attempt to mention it
- 2 - if you got the sense they attempted to mention it, but didn’t actually succeed
- 3 - if they extremely briefly mentioned something but did not elaborate or they explained something incorrectly to a point where it conflicted with the message they are trying to say
- 4 - if they explained it but inadequately
- 5 - if they explained it more or less adequately, but left out a key point or there is still some kind of hole in the argument
- 6 - if they explained it adequately (you can see all the essential parts are there) but may need to be a tiny bit clearer
- 7 - they explained it well, there are no holes in what they are saying

5.2.2: Example Text Review Comments:
While there is no one right way to give text reviews, what is most important is that they are HELPFUL. Almost as important is that for them to be well received is for you to be polite and courteous. All criticism should be CONSTRUCTIVE. Negative, destructive, aggressive, inappropriate or rude Reviews will not be tolerated, and we reserve the right to deduct points for them.

Good/Helpful Review: “This paper was well outlined, and written in the correct formal style with no obvious grammatical errors. The only confusing part was that on gravitational lensing, and why gravity bends the light, and that is why we can see it. Dark matter doesn't really block out light, but rather the gravitational strength of dark matter bends space-time and the light travels around the galaxy along that curved path. The explanation of the orbital velocities of stars in the galaxy was very clear and showed a great understanding of general relativity.”

Good/Helpful Review: “The paper was very good. The introduction was very strong, it set up the paper perfectly by introducing us to information that we need to know at the start and it lets us know what the paper is going to be about. Paragraph 1 is good, it reinforces our understanding of gravity and explains why planets farther away rotate slower around the sun, while those closer rotate faster; it also introduces us to the first reason why we believe dark matter existKeep in mind that you are scoring for the
main concept mentioned in the rubric question and not just for a particular detail that was specified." Or, "Keep in mind that you are scoring for the main concept of the rubric question. Some papers may not explicitly state the key point or may incorrectly incorporate the concept. However, this does not mean that the paper failed to incorporate that concept and should receive a 1. This at least shows that the paper did attempt to include the relevant concept and should thus be graded so." s. Paragraph two was good but it could have been made stronger by including that there are ways scientists are able to calculate just how much force is needed to make the stars on the outside rotate as fast as those closer, giving more reason to believe dark matter exists. Paragraph three is very strong, the example you used was very easy to picture in my head and it was very well explained. The conclusion is good, it reviews all the topics discussed in the paper and wraps them up all together to explain why we believe dark matter exists. Overall this was a very good paper.”

Bad/Unhelpful Review: “Overall I thought it was okay but it could have been clearer in some parts.”

Bad/Unhelpful Review: “I thought your paper was excellent.”

5.3 Example Back-Evaluation Comments:
Back evaluations are a way to provide feedback to Reviewers. This will help them become better Reviewers in the future (and help them get better grades). If you thought a review really helped you understand how you could improve in the future, tell them! More importantly, give them 5 stars. On the other hand, if you don’t understand some criticism, let them know how they could improve feedback in the future. While this might surprise you, this task is NOT about your paper, or whether you agree or disagree with their Review, Back-Evaluations are about you giving feedback to the Reviewer on how helpful their Review was.

Some further comments are in order: If you disagree with the Review or the scores, you are allowed to politely say say in your Back-Evaluations. More importantly, send email to 109help and we will personally look at your scores and give you the grade you deserve. Similarly, if a Reviewer is rude, aggressive or otherwise inappropriate, it is equally inappropriate to respond in kind. Instead, we expect you to be kind in your words and appropriate in your back-evaluation scoring, as well as to let the instructors know so we can stop it for the future. If you point us to the Reviews, we can figure out who it was. We understand the temptation to lash out at a Reviewer if you are unhappy with your scores, but part of growing up is politely respond in your Back-Evaluations. This is NOT an opportunity to retaliate. No matter what, all Back-Evaluations should be CONSTRUCTIVE. Negative, destructive, aggressive, inappropriate or rude Back-Evaluations will not be tolerated, and we reserve the right to deduct points for them.

Scoring Notes: Since it’s useful to understand how many stars to give a reviewer we’ll say a few words.
• **1 Star**: This is a low F and should be reserved for only the most egregiously bad review. They didn’t read it. Said nothing of value. Even saying it was good (assuming it was) is helpful and means they tried a little.

• **2 Stars**: Giving 2 stars out of 5 is still the equivalent of giving an F. If they followed the instructions and actually gave feedback, then that’s probably 3 stars.

• **3 Stars**: This is the equivalent of giving a C. If they followed the instructions and actually gave feedback, then that’s probably at least 3 stars. If they did that, but it was the bare minimum, then this is 3 stars. If they put a lot of nitpicky stuff that doesn’t mean their review was bad; remember they may have been trying to be helpful but it wasn’t appreciated by you. Not everyone can give big picture criticism, especially if your paper was sound. They shouldn’t be penalized for that.

• **4 Stars**: If their review, between the individual scores and the text they gave, clearly showed they read carefully and thought critically about your paper that’s probably 4 or more stars.

• **5 Stars**: Ideally a Reviewer will give you some helpful criticism so that if you decided to submit a Revision their comments would help you make it better. This can include big picture and/or text, grammar etc. If they do so, they should get 5 stars. It’s also important to remember that if you happened to submit an excellent paper, and they had nothing to add that doesn’t mean they can’t get a 5 star review.

**Good/Helpful Back-Evaluation Text**: “I saw that I did use words that a lay-down person wouldn't understand or comprehend. This was useful because it helps me understand what words to take out and shows me what phrases I used that was difficult to understand. I’ll make sure to add more detail towards the gravity portion of evidence. Thank you!”

**Good/Helpful Back-Evaluation Text**: "I think I see what you're saying here, but your review was a little hard to understand in this regard. If you said it more like XXX, it would be more helpful."

**Good/Helpful Back-Evaluation Text**: “Extremely helpful, breaking down each part of my paper and giving feedback for each of those parts is exactly the kind of review I was wanting. ”

**Good/Helpful Back-Evaluation Text**: "I appreciate the review and you have good points. I may suggest trying to use more constructive criticism as well."

**Bad/Unhelpful Back-Evaluation Text**: “I didn’t understand this review“ Make sure you tell the reviewer how to improve.

**Bad/Unhelpful Back-Evaluation Text**: “thanks”

**Bad/Unhelpful Back-Evaluation Text**: “This reviewer suffers from an inability to understand the colon and how it is used. This understanding will be critical for this person to correctly evaluate grammar and sentence structure in the future. Other than that, I felt as though he/she was too harsh on my ability to relate my evidence. Was it perfect? No. But it was pretty good in my estimation.”
Bad/Unhelpful Back-Evaluation Text: “First of all, the description of general relativity is supposed to be surface level. This is because the paper is about dark matter, not gravity. The readers need to only know what you call "surface" for the purpose of this paper. Second, the final paragraph was not one of the points outlined in the instructions, because it is something we like to call "conclusion". Noted the instructions did not forbid the writers to use a paragraph to conclude a paper. The point of this paragraph, in case you somehow missed it, is to conclude this paper. I'm not sure how much clearer the writer could have made it. Lastly, the accusation of choppy grammar needs a little bit of support. Where and how the writer could have improved?”