JGPT Review Writing Suggestions

1. Read the manuscript carefully

2. If you wish, use the JGPT Reviewer 'Read along' Template as you read through the manuscript, making notes in the right-hand column as you go.

3. Pause to think – what is your overall impression of this paper? Consider what your recommendation to the editor will be:

   a. Accept as is

   b. Request minor revisions

   c. Request major revisions

   d. Reject

4. Introductory paragraph:

   a. Begin the review with an opening sentence or two that summarizes the study very concisely; this lets the author know you have actually read the paper and understand what the study found.

   b. Include a sentence or two in which you recognize the most positive aspects of the study and/or manuscript.

   c. Summarize the major strengths and weaknesses of the paper.

      i. Save the details for later

   d. Conclude this paragraph with a sentence or two to convey your recommendation to the editor.

5. Second paragraph – focus on your MAJOR points; numbered bullet list OK.

   a. If you recommended that the paper be rejected, focus on 3 to 5 main problems that led you to conclude that the paper should not be considered for publication.

      i. For each problem, indicate what the problem is and – if not obvious - why you consider it a 'fatal flaw'.

      ii. When appropriate, help the author find the problem to which you refer with examples from the text (with line numbers).

      iii. When appropriate, include references that support your points.

b. If you recommended that the author make major or minor revisions, in this paragraph include those problems that absolutely must be corrected for the paper to be considered further.

    i. For each problem, indicate what the problem is and – if not obvious - why you consider it a 'must fix' issue.

    ii. For each problem, specify the change you would like to see.

    iii. Organize the problem list by manuscript section (Abstract, Introduction, Methods, etc.)

    iv. Use line numbers to help the author find the text to which you refer.

    v. When referring to a pattern you note in the text, provide a few select examples.

6. Third paragraph when revisions are requested – add your MINOR points; numbered bullet list OK.

a. In this paragraph, include those problems that would improve the paper substantially if they were fixed, but are not "make or break" changes.

    i. For each problem, indicate what the problem is and – if not obvious - how you think it would improve the paper if it were fixed.

    ii. For each problem, specify the change you would like to see.

    iii. Organize the list by manuscript section (Abstract, Introduction, Methods, etc.)

    iv. Use line numbers to help the author find the text to which you refer.

    v. When referring to a pattern you note in the text, provide a few select examples.

7. Closing paragraph:

a. If you recommended that the paper be rejected, close on a positive note with a comment or two about the positive aspects of the work.

b. If you recommended that the author make major or minor revisions, close on a positive note by expressing optimism that the revisions will result in an improved manuscript with a heightened chance for acceptance, or by saying you look forward to reading their revised manuscript, or something along those lines.

8. Re-read your review, it should be:
    a. Thorough, clear, objective and fair, professional, tactful and diplomatic
    b. Free of bias, personal opinion, emotion, rudeness, sarcasm or cynicism
    c. Motivated by a desire to help the author of a paper for which you recommended rejection understand how and why you arrived at the decision you did
    d. Motivated by a desire to help the author of a paper for which you recommended revisions understand clearly and specifically how to meet your expectations for requested changes