



## Recognizing our Reviewers and Authors, and a Few Insights into Tektonika's Review Process

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










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# Recognizing our Reviewers and Authors, and a Few Insights into Tektonika's Review Process

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To mark the publication of this first issue of Tektonika's second volume, we were inspired to write a short editorial focusing on our reviewers and our review process, providing thoughts and tips on what makes a great review and author rebuttal.

## 1 A Big Thank You to Our Reviewers and Authors

From the start of Tektonika in May 2022 to mid-June 2024, we have published 30 papers and 32 editorials (including this one). Meanwhile, we have declined, sometimes with encouragement to resubmit, 13 manuscripts before (7) and after (6) peer-review. Also, at the time of writing, we have 5 accepted manuscripts in the copy-editing pipeline. This would not have been possible without the crucial work of all the reviewers involved in evaluating the submitted manuscripts, each reviewed by either 2 or 3 reviewers. Our editors deeply appreciate the time reviewers dedicate to reading and evaluating the manuscripts. We are very satisfied with the soundness of their reports and their polite and constructive tones, and we are confident that these have helped the authors to raise the quality of the published papers to excellent scientific standards. As a diamond open-access journal, we publish all reviews and author rebuttals in a reviewer report alongside the published article. We, the Tektonika executive editors and core members, wish to warmly thank the 86 reviewers involved in the evaluation of those published or accepted papers. Many of our

reviewers have agreed to disclose their name during the review process, and are those who did are listed below in alphabetical order in recognition of their contribution.

*Juan Alcade, Billy Andrews, Solène Antoine, Maëlis Arnould, Jacqueline Austermann, Lydia Bailey, Attila Balázs, Rebecca Bell, Anouk Beniest, David Bercovici, Tom Blenkinsop, Everton Bongioio, Sasha Brune, Laura Burrell, John Cannon, Guillaume Caumon, Marie-Luce Chevalier, Carlos Costa, John Craddock, João Duarte, Guillaume Dupont-Nivet, Nate Eichelberger, Valentina Espinoza, Sian Evans, Maryam Ezati, Maria Giuditta Fellin, Naiara Fernandez, Melanie Finch, Lukas Fuchs, Roy Gabrielsen, Carmen Gaina, Fanny Garel, Aude Gebelin, Laurent Gernigon, Júlia Gómez-Romeu, Raphaël Grandin, Nicolas Harrichhausen, Michael Heap, Stephen Hicks, Douwe van Hinsbergen, Nicholas Hunter, Salvatore Iaccarino, Tsuyoshi Ishikawa, Esther Izquierdo Llavall, Romain Jolivet, Ágnes Kiraly, Robin Lacassin, Maryline Le Beon, Marthe Lefevre, Craig Magee, Lucan Mameri, Simone Masoch, Lisa McNeil, Nadine McQuarrie, Ben Melosh, Hugo Moreira, Leonardo Muniz Pichel, Conor O'Sullivan, Isabelle Panet, Lucía Pérez-Díaz, Jonathan Pownhall, Adina Pusok, Anne Replumaz, Neil Ribe, Francisca Robledo Carjaval, Vincent Roche, Martine Simoes, Natasha Stanton, Konstanze Stübner, Dan-Mircea Tămaş, Michael Tetley, Jeff Unruh, Holly Unwin, Jérôme Van der Woerd, Fabian Wadsworth, J Kim Welford, Simon Williams, Sam Wimpenny, Reinhard Wolff, Martina Zucchi, Frank Zwaan.*

We also would like to thank the authors of the published and accepted papers for their willingness

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to get involved in the adventure of a new journal by submitting their manuscripts to Tektonika. Their support of DOAJ is greatly appreciated. The executive editors also congratulate them for the seriousness in which they engaged with article revision, in responding to reviewers, and helping to build a strong reputation for Tektonika as a home for true open-access research in the fields of structural geology and tectonics.

## 2 About the Journal's Review Practices and our Review Form

At Tektonika, we wished to offer a structured review form to help reviewers answer the many questions related to a manuscript's evaluation, and to support authors in constructing their response to the reviews that they receive. Our goal was also to promote a fair and impartial assessment, by emphasizing particular aspects that we believe all manuscripts should be reviewed against, and to support new reviewers who are unfamiliar with a traditional manuscript review process to prepare their review. The review form is highly detailed and aims to consider all aspects of a manuscript: e.g., quality and soundness of the abstract, introduction, figures, completeness of the reference list, etc. We greatly recommend using this form but do not make it mandatory. We note that about half of the reviewers used the form, but in various ways and not always answering all items in detail. In some cases, reviewers did a hybrid review with their own standard evaluation at the start, followed by short answers to the form bullet points. The other half of reviewers provided a "classical" textual review, typically structured with a brief introduction summarizing the study's subject, followed by their overall assessment, detailed comments, and often a short conclusion with their recommendation.

Although initially strong advocates of the review form, the opinion of Tektonika's executive editors is now more mixed regarding its practicality and effectiveness. There were instances where the editors themselves found the reviewer's evaluation using the form cumbersome because the relevant information was scattered, insufficiently structured, and repetitive. In some cases, the authors have also reported struggling to structure their rebuttal using the form and opting to write a standard rebuttal letter, reiterating the points raised by the reviewer in the form. At Tektonika, we are aware of these issues, and we plan to improve the review form by making it interactive and easier to navigate, to fulfil its main purpose in supporting a fairer peer-review process.

Thus, if you are invited to review a manuscript submitted to Tektonika and feel comfortable with the review form, please use it! Try to answer all the relevant items using the bullet points and, more importantly, explain your rating in the comment boxes. We do hope this will help less experienced

reviewers to better structure their evaluation, and authors to enhance the quality of their arguments and discourse. Alternatively, if, as a reviewer, you prefer the classic textual review approach, this is also acceptable. In any case, the aim is to provide a thorough, well-structured, and well-reasoned review. Providing enough explanations and arguments will allow editors and authors to understand the gaps in the presented work. On this basis the authors will be able to effectively revise their manuscript.

## 3 What Makes for a Great Review and Response?

When evaluating a manuscript as a reviewer, remember that the authors are fellow researchers who care a lot about their work. Offer your feedback constructively. Use positive wording and tone. Avoid sarcasm or jokes (AND CAPITAL LETTERS) even if they seem light and potentially harmless. Start by highlighting the paper's strengths and significance, then provide your suggestions tactfully and with enough details to support your points (citing relevant literature), and finish with encouraging words. Even if your recommendation is negative, please provide a detailed explanation of the main issues, then suggest how the manuscript can be improved to reach acceptable scientific standards.

On the other hand, authors should remember that editors and reviewers are not their adversaries. This point is excellently summarized as follows by *Gastel and Day* (2016, page 136): *"The editor and the reviewers are usually on your side. Their primary function is to help you express yourself effectively and provide you with an assessment of the science involved. It is to your advantage to cooperate with them in all ways possible"* As an author receiving reviews, approach all suggestions and criticisms with a positive mindset. Keep in mind that a reviewer's misunderstanding often indicates a need for clearer explanations or stronger arguments on your part. Implement all acceptable corrections, as this will undoubtedly improve the quality and readability of your paper. If you disagree with a reviewer's comment, explain your position politely and constructively, using scientific arguments to support your case. Finally, write a well-structured and detailed response and make sure to address all (yes, all) comments from both reviewers and editors comprehensively. Simply stating that a concern has been addressed puts the onus on editors to find the relevant text and to decipher how you consider it solves the issue. This can lead to misinterpretation and increased handling time. Clearly identify and list the changes made to the manuscript. By doing this, you will also do your part to making the whole editorial process faster and more efficient.

Below are a few recommended readings to help reviewers and authors understand the process of scientific articles reviewing and revising. These

resources can be used to guide reviewers in crafting their reviews and to assist authors in responding to them and revising their manuscripts effectively.

## 4 A few Recommended Readings for Reviewers and Authors

Perhaps the best way to define an honest and constructive review is by considering its opposite. In this regard, one may start with the provocative pamphlet "Instruction for Reviewer 2, how to reject a manuscript for arbitrary reasons" by *Dahlgren* (2022). Adopting opposite strategies to their "eight strategies that all reviewers should apply in order to reject any paper" will enable making a fair and excellent review.

Novice authors and reviewers will find useful explanations about the role of the editors and reviewers in chapter 21 – The review process, how to deal with editors – of the book "How to write and publish a scientific paper" (*Gastel and Day*, 2016), and also in the book "How to survive peer review" (*Wager et al.*, 2002). The book "Novice writers and scholarly publication" by *Habibie and Hyland* (2018) provides more personal views written from the editor side (chapter 14, "Journal editors, gatekeepers or custodians", by S. Starfield and B. Partridge) or the reviewer side (chapter 15, "We are all reviewer #2: a window into the secret world of peer review", by C.M. Tardy). Excellent recommendations about how to revise a manuscript and answer the reviewers comments are given in the blog post "Reviewer 2 is not your nemesis - how to revise and resubmit" by S. *Fletcher-Watson*, and the paper "Top 10 tips for responding to reviewer and editor's comments" (*Annesley*, 2011).

Finally, if you are a novice author or reviewer, you can gain valuable insights by reading the open review reports we have made available alongside published papers.

## 5 Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, we would like once again to thank all the participants in this new adventure - authors,

reviewers and the volunteers behind the scenes. Your enthusiasm has helped setting up the first-ever structural geology and tectonics journal, run entirely by the community through voluntary contributions at no cost to authors or institutions. We hope that, like us, you are proud of this achievement. We remain committed to improving our review process, and thus welcome your continued feedback.

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