

How to Revise Your 1st Draft: Cheatsheet (1/2)

- Check that the title is self-contained, as jargon-free as possible, and in perfect sync with the abstract.
- Make sure that the abstract follows the hourglass structure: broad context, narrower context, your question, your result, its direct implications, its broader significance
- Make sure that there is a clear question and a clear answer. Papers are stories about questions and answers.
- Check that your paper is focused; leave out results that are not required for supporting the key conclusion, or move them to the SI.
- Check that you provide enough background information: your reader does not know what you know. Err on the side of caution: papers that are too easy to read are rarer than unicorns.
- Check that the figures tell your story. If you just glance through the figures and skim their captions, do you get the point of the paper?
- Check that you have provided all the necessary information for the reader to be able to replicate your results.
- Check that the discussion section contains new questions in addition to answers and that it makes the significance of your results clear.
- Check that the paper ends with something concrete and worth remembering.
- Check that your nomenclature and notation are consistent. Using an outside reader as a guinea pig is recommended here.

