



Early Career Academics Series Episode #7
June 06 2022



**PEER REVIEW:
Solve Problems and
GET PUBLISHED!**



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About Dr. Dean Meyer



Dr Dean Meyer has a background in environmental science with a specialist interest in toxicology and public health. Her doctoral research work focused on molecular mechanisms of metal detoxification in an invertebrate model. Her other research interests include the mechanisms of toxicity and disease causation, and the occupational sources of xenobiotics and their physiological effects.

Dr Meyer spent eight years working at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta and has an extensive background in the areas of laboratory safety and environmental health. Dr Meyer is a certified Editor in the Life Sciences (ELS) and joined Edanz as an editor in 2015.

About Scott McCleary, M.Ed.Tech



Scott specializes in online instructional design for lifelong learning and professional development.

He has developed and delivered online training programs and products for more than 50 organizations worldwide (including Fortune 500 firms) in fields such as medicine & pharma, business and finance, law, big tech, government, K-12, and higher education.

Scott is the creator of Edanz Learning Lab, one of the world's most advanced online resources for researchers at all career levels.

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SOLUTIONS

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KAETSU UNIVERSITY

PEER REVIEW: Solve Problems and GET PUBLISHED!



Today We Will Learn and Discuss:

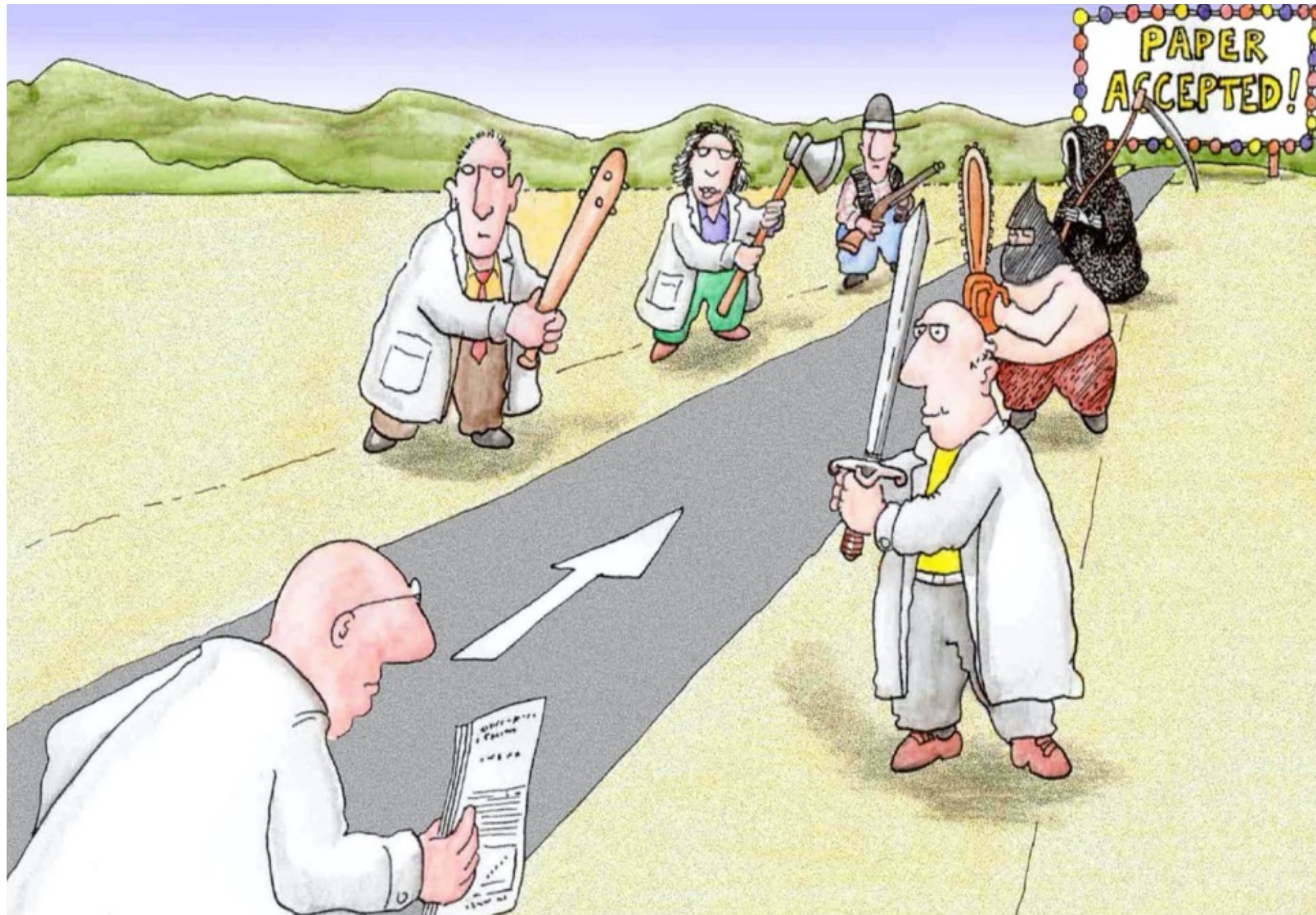
- 1. How peer review works**
 - 2. Navigating peer review**
 - 3. How the experts solve tough peer review problems**
- + Ask YOUR questions!**



Topic 1 of 3: **Know How Peer Review Works**

What is the purpose of peer review?

Peer review **filters** and **improves content** for researchers and readers



Perceptions of peer review



The peer review process explained:
Different forms / Value in the academic community



- ▶ Peer review is a **positive process**
- ▶ Improves your manuscript
- ▶ Advances the field
- ▶ Become involved in the peer review process
 - Obligation as a researcher in the community
 - Improves your manuscript writing

“The process used to judge the quality of academic papers submitted for publication in scholarly journals”

“Peer reviewed papers are thought to be reliable because they have undergone this process before publication”

Understanding peer review as an author vs. as a reviewer

as an author:

- ✓ Enhance article's chances of acceptance
- ✓ More effectively respond to comments

as a reviewer:

- ✓ Comment constructively on the work of others
- ✓ Develop a key transferrable skill (performing peer review)

Submission process



Peer review timeline: 3 to 12 months



- Evaluation
- Finding reviewers

How Peer Review Works

Peer review models



Single-blind review

Double-blind review

Triple-blind review

Open (identity) review

?
Opened review

Reviewers named in article

Open reports

Reviews published +/- reviewer names, +/- author replies

?

Portable review

Reviews +/- reviewer names reused by another journal, with permission

Cascading / Transferable review

Reviews +/- reviewer names sent to partner journal

“Open review” on public platform

Confidential and/or blinded review should remain so!

Peer review models: Blinded / Masked

- **Single-blind:** Reviewers' names not revealed to authors
- **Double-/Triple-blind:** Anonymous
- **Open:** All names revealed
- **Transparent:** Reviews published with paper
- **Fast Track:** Expedited if public emergency



Peer review models: Other types

- **Transferable/Cascading:** Manuscript & reviews passed to another journal of publisher
- **Portable:** Manuscript & reviews passed along to another journal
- **Collaborative:** Reviewers (& authors) engage with each other
- **Post-publication:** Peer or public review after publication
- **Pre-submission (“portable”):** Reviews passed to editor at submission

PRO TIPS for submitting to 'double-blind' peer review

Submit title page and acknowledgments as two separate files

Anonymize place names (e.g., regions and nationalities)

Don't write: "As we previously showed..."²⁴

Remove any author identifiers from word/PDF submissions (signed comments, etc)

Ask YOUR questions!

**Ask us anything about
the peer review
process!**





Topic 2 of 3: **Successfully Navigating Peer Review**

In a hurry to publish? Do THIS!

Before submission:

- Follow guidelines
- Check your paper carefully
- Prepare a cover letter
- Recommend reviewers

During revision:

- Fully revise manuscript
- Respond to all comments
- Stick to deadlines; ask for extensions in advance



What are reviewers looking for?

Your research

- Relevant hypothesis/question
- Good experimental design
- Ethically done and reported
- Appropriate methodology
- Good data analysis
- Valid conclusions

Your manuscript

- Logical flow of information
- Manuscript structure and formatting
- Appropriate references
- High readability

Remember: Peer review is a positive process!

Dealing with peer reviewer bias

Examples of reviewer bias:

- **By-line bias**
- **Institutional bias**
- **Geographical bias**
- **Language bias**
- **Research ethics bias**
- **Methodology bias**

What can be done to minimize bias?

Use single-masked/
double-masked
review

Limit grant
applications
to two pages

Focus on
content rather
than mechanics

Employ a diverse
review panel

Deliver unconscious
bias training to
reviewers

Deploy tech tools
(like AI) to improve
selection process

Points to Consider:

**Your paper has been
REJECTED by the journal.**

HOW do you respond?



Decision letter: Common reviewer complaints

Ideas are not logically organized; Poor presentation

Purpose and relevance are unclear

Introduction lacks focus and does not justify approach

Methods are unclear (variables, missing data)

Not discussed: Negative results, limitations, implications

Discussion has repeated results; **Conclusions** too general

Cited studies are not up-to-date

Decision letter: Interpret it carefully!

- **“Slush pile” desk review:** Rejection (not novel, no focus or rationale, wrong scope or format) / Resubmit (after edit)
- **Peer review:** Accept/ Accept with revisions/ Revise & resubmit/ Reject
- **Hard rejection** (*“decline the manuscript for publication”*)
 - Flaw in design or methods
 - Major misinterpretation, lack of evidence
- **Soft rejection** (*“cannot consider it further at this point”*)
 - Incomplete reporting or overgeneralization
 - Additional analyses needed
 - Presentation problem

PRO TIP:
Take a break
before & after
reading the
letter

Decision letter, top part

Decision

Reason

Comments

Dear Dr. Meyer,

Manuscript ID JOS-11-7739: “Self-consciousness of affluence predicts age of entry into labor market.”

Your manuscript has been reviewed, and we regret to inform you that based on our Expert reviewers’ comments, it is not possible to further consider your manuscript in its current form for the *Applied Psychosocial Economics: An International Journal*.

Although the reviews are not entirely negative, it is evident from the extensive comments and concerns that the manuscript, in its current form, does not meet the criteria expected of papers in our *Journal*. The results appear to be too preliminary and incomplete for publication at the present time.

The reviewer comments are included at the bottom of this letter. I hope the information provided by the reviewers will be helpful to revise your manuscript in future. Thank you for your interest in the journal.

“Soft” Rejection: The editor *might be interested*

- ✓ The Reviewer comments are **not entirely negative**.
- ✓ It is not possible to consider your manuscript **in its current form**.
- ✓ I hope the information provided will be helpful to **revise your manuscript in the future**.
- ✓ I regret that the outcome has not been favorable **at this time**.

“Hard” Rejection: The editor is *not interested*

- ✗ We **cannot publish** your manuscript
- ✗ Your study **does not contain novel results** that merit publication in our journal.
- ✗ We appreciate your interest in our journal. However, we will **not further consider** your manuscript for publication.
- ✗ We wish you luck in publishing your results **elsewhere.**

Decision letter, bottom part

How to respond

Due date for resubmission

...You will be unable to make your revisions on the originally submitted version of the manuscript. Instead, revise your manuscript using a word processing program and save it on your computer. Please also highlight **the changes to your manuscript** within the document by **using bold or colored text**. Once the revised manuscript is prepared, you can upload it and submit it through your Author Center.

When submitting your revised manuscript, you will be able to **respond to the comments made by the reviewer(s) in the space provided**. You can use this space to document any changes you make to the original manuscript. **In order to expedite the processing of the revised manuscript, please be as specific as possible in your response to the reviewer(s).**

Because we are trying to facilitate timely publication of manuscripts submitted to *JSE*, your revised manuscript should be **uploaded by 10 May**. **If it is not possible for you to submit your revision in a reasonable amount of time, we may have to consider your paper as a new submission.**

Check that “rejection” email again!

Hard rejection: you cannot resubmit

We **cannot publish** your manuscript.

Your study **does not contain novel results** that merit publication in our journal.

We appreciate your interest in our journal. However, we **will not further consider** your manuscript for publication.

We wish you luck in publishing your results **elsewhere**.

Soft rejection: you can resubmit

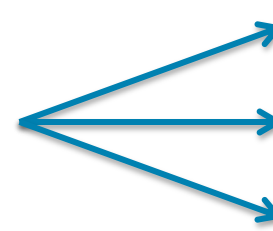
- ✓ The reviewer comments **are not entirely** negative.
- ✓ It is not possible to consider your manuscript **in its current form**.
- ✓ I hope the information provided will be helpful **to revise your manuscript** in the future.
- ✓ I regret that the outcome has not been favorable **at this time**.

Reviewer response letter

Respond to *every*
reviewer comment!

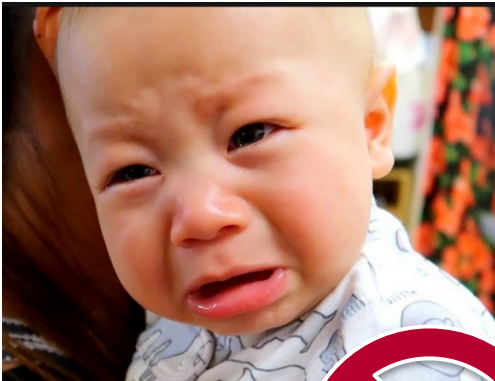
- Revise and keep to the deadline; be polite
- Restate reviewer's comment
- Refer to line and page numbers

Make your revisions
easy to find for
reviewers and editors

- 
- Use a different color font
 - Highlight the text
 - ~~Strikethrough font for deletions~~

BAD response letter

Reviewer Comment: In your analysis of the data you have chosen to use a somewhat obscure fitting function (regression). In my opinion, a simple Gaussian function would have sufficed. Moreover, the results would be more instructive and easier to compare to previous results.



Author's Response: We disagree with you! What are you talking about? It's soooo clear that you're not familiar at all with the current analytical methods in the field. I recommend that you identify a more suitable reviewer for my manuscript now!!!

GOOD Response letter (agree with reviewers)

Agreement

Why agree

Revisions

Location

Reviewer Comment: In your analysis of the data you have chosen to use a somewhat obscure fitting function (regression). In my opinion, a simple Gaussian function would have sufficed. Moreover, the results would be more instructive and easier to compare to previous results.

Response: We agree with the Reviewer's assessment of the analysis. Our tailored function, in its current form, makes it difficult to tell that this measurement constitutes a significant improvement over previously reported values. We describe our new analysis using a Gaussian fitting function in our revised Results section (Page 6, Lines 12–18).

GOOD response letter (disagree with reviewers)

Disagree

give evidence

revisions

location

Reviewer Comment: In your analysis of the data you have chosen to use a somewhat obscure fitting function (regression). In my opinion, a simple Gaussian function would have sufficed. Moreover, the results would be more instructive and easier to compare to previous results.

Response: Although a simple Gaussian fit would facilitate comparison with the results of other studies, our tailored function allows for the analysis of the data in terms of the “Pack model” [Pack et al., 2015]. Hence, we have explained the use of this function and the Pack model in our revised Discussion section (Page 12, Lines 2–6).

Portable peer review

Has your paper been peer-reviewed and rejected? Sometimes you can **pass it to another journal and show the editor your first set of peer-review comments**. This is called **'portable peer-review'**.

Write to the editor of your next selected journal and ask: **"May I share peer-review comments from our first submission so that you can see we have already revised this article?"**

Many journals/publishers now operate manuscript transfer services:



Cross-publisher alliance of neuroscience journals that accept reviews from other NPRC journals

Currently has 68 journals across publishers
<http://nprc.incf.org/>

Ethical 'red flags'

During peer review you should not be asked to:

- Add citations to papers written by that reviewer
- Make changes to more favourably reflect earlier work
- Remove or modify hypotheses to placate a reviewer

Having peer review issues as an author?

Write to the journal editor and ask for help.

Journal editors should police the peer review process

Stuck in the system?

The average time from submission to online publication is 90 days

‘Dear Editor, We see that our paper is still awaiting reviews: Can we make some suggestions to speed up the process?’

‘Is there anything we can do to help with the process?’

‘Here are some suggestions for additional peer-reviewers you might like to contact’

Ask YOUR questions!

**Ask us anything about
responding to peer
review or peer review
ethics!**





Topic 3 of 3:
See how the experts solve tough peer review problems

Points to Consider:

What was YOUR toughest peer review experience?

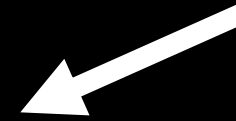
How did you get through it successfully?



How do the Edanz experts handle peer review nightmares?



*Scary Peer
Reviewer*





Problem 1 :

We got a peer review back from a journal recently. One peer reviewer asked us to cite one of their articles.



Edanz expert:

Dr. Ni Ni Moe Myint, CMPP
PhD in Cancer Biology,
University of Leicester



Problem 1 :

We got a peer review back from a journal recently. One peer reviewer asked us to cite one of their articles.



Nini's Solution:

We checked the citation and found that it was not the most recent on the topic. After discussing two possible citations with the authors, we decided to follow the reviewer's suggestion and cite the article they indicated. No further issue was raised, and the article was accepted.

“ *Problem 2:*
Sometimes authors get comments back from peer review
and it’s hard to persuade them to make changes. ”



Edanz expert:
Mary



Problem 2:

Sometimes authors get comments back from peer review and it's hard to persuade them to make changes.



Mary's Solution:

We talk to authors all the time and we help them to manage their submissions. This sometimes means making compromises with their work in order to ensure their papers do get accepted.

Problem 3:
“ When papers get rejected, authors lose their marbles and rush to the next journal without thinking things through properly! ”



Edanz Expert:
Dr Jacqueline Tudball
PhD in Public Health
University of New South Wales

Problem 3:

“ When papers get rejected, authors lose their marbles and rush to the next journal without thinking things through properly! ”



Jacqueline's Solution:

We help authors to make good decisions about journal selection. We carefully evaluate their options and perform detailed journal analyses to inform their submission.

“

Problem 4:

Bias in peer review can be a huge issue, especially in small fields where everyone knows everyone else!

”



Edanz Expert:

Dr Jacqueline Tudball

PhD in Public Health

University of New South Wales

“

Problem 4:

Bias in peer review can be a huge issue, especially in small fields where everyone knows everyone else!

”



Jacqueline's Solution:

We assist authors with the manuscript submission process, including which kind of peer review is best for them and their paper.

Problem 5:

“ [We got a] vague reviewer comment that statements throughout the manuscript were insufficiently supported by citations, even though almost everything was well-cited! ”



Edanz Expert:
Dr. Ruth Tunn

Problem 5:

“ [We got a] vague reviewer comment that statements throughout the manuscript were insufficiently supported by citations, even though almost everything was well-cited! ”



Ruth's solution:

We checked through all the statements and references and identified a couple of places where an additional citation or two could be added/updated, then composed a rebuttal stating the actions taken and that we were confident that all claims were fully supported by the evidence cited.

Problem 6:

“ An editor returned conflicting peer reviewer comments: one reviewer said to *expand* the Introduction to include additional background on X, but another reviewer said to *shorten* the Introduction and focus only on Y! ”



Dr. Daniel McGowan, PhD
Edanz Science Director

Problem 6:



An editor returned conflicting peer reviewer comments: one reviewer said to *expand* the Introduction to include additional background on X, but another reviewer said to *shorten* the Introduction and focus only on Y!



Daniel's solution:

Solution: we shortened the Introduction slightly and focused mainly on Y, as that was most relevant to the present study. However, we also mentioned X in the Discussion section, citing a review article for readers interested in more detail than was appropriate for this paper.

Ask YOUR questions!

**Ask us anything about
solving peer review
problems!**





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Thank you!

Any questions?

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