A. DECISION OPTIONS

The editor may dispose of a reviewed manuscript in four ways. In all cases, authors should be informed of the editor’s decision. All manuscript reviewers also should be informed of the editor’s decision and of other reviewers’ comments (see Section VII.D above).

The four possible editorial decisions are:

1. **Reject without review**: Not considered appropriate for the journal. The editor should send a letter of explanation.

2. **Reject**: Based on advice from reviewers and/or the editor’s own reading.

3. **Revise and resubmit (R&R)**: Reject this version, but invite author to revise the manuscript and submit a new version.

4. **Conditional accept**: Accept on the condition that the author makes certain clearly specified revisions.

5. **Accept**: The editor requires no changes before publication, except for those made during copyediting.

The primary difference between “revise and resubmit” and “conditional accept” is that, for the former the revised manuscript is sent again through a review process; for conditional acceptances, the editor decides whether the new version is ready for publication without consulting additional reviewers.

B. REJECTING A MANUSCRIPT

Although letters of rejection may follow a common structure or format, each should be individually composed rather than being a form letter. The editor should concisely summarize his or her reasons for rejecting the author’s paper. Vague statements such as “The enclosed comments by one of the reviewers give some of the reasons for our decision” are insufficient, although it is appropriate to refer to reviewers’ comments if they adequately explain the reasons for the rejection. Dogmatic statements about the worth of the paper, or any implication that the journal’s evaluation of the paper is definitive, should be avoided. At times it is appropriate for an editor to suggest other publication outlets for a rejected paper. See Appendix N for a sample rejection letter.

C. INVITING A REVISION

The handling of revised manuscripts is the source of many complaints from authors and causes much friction between authors and editors. Therefore, when, in the opinion of the editor, the needed revisions are not extensive and/or are not difficult, the preferred disposition is conditional acceptance rather than an invitation to revise and resubmit.
When an R&R is clearly the proper disposition, the letter from the editor should clearly state how the resubmitted manuscript will be handled (including whether one or more of the original reviewers will read the revised manuscript). The editor should give the author a specific deadline, after which the editor’s offers regarding how a revised manuscript will be handled will not necessarily hold. Whenever possible, the editor should send the revision to the original reviewers. Rejection of a resubmitted paper on grounds that could have been used to reject the first version would be seen rightly by the author as unfair, as it reflects either an inappropriate shift in standards or less-than-thorough evaluation of the first manuscript.

When the editor invites an author to resubmit, it is his/her responsibility to summarize the changes that would make the manuscript acceptable and to specify which reviewers’ comments (if any) are to be adhered to or ignored. It is crucial that in the letter to the author, the editor deal with contradictory or inconsistent recommendations made by different reviewers. See Appendix O for a sample letter requesting a revision. Generally in this letter, the editor asks the author to include with the revised paper a summary of the changes made in response to the reviews and the editor’s suggestions. The author should describe in this memo how he or she has addressed the reviewers’ and the editor’s concerns.

**D. Accepting a Manuscript for Publication**

Letters of acceptance should state clearly whether the acceptance is outright or conditional. In the latter case, the conditions should be stated as clearly and completely as possible. The editor should give the author a reasonable deadline for receipt of the suggested or required revisions.

If the acceptance is outright, the editor’s letter should include an estimate of when the paper will be published. See Appendix P for sample letters accepting a manuscript for publication.

**E. Appeals**

The ASA has no formal appeals process to be followed by authors of rejected papers. Editors should seriously consider authors’ complaints, however, and should deal courteously and professionally with even the most unreasonable dissatisfactions. Emotions can run high in such situations, so editors should remain sensitive to authors’ feelings. Should an author present evidence of carelessness, incompetence, or bias on the part of a reviewer, the editor may consider such complaints as grounds for reconsideration (after additional reviews). If disagreements between an author and an editor cannot be resolved, either person may bring the problem to the attention of the Committee on Publications.