

FAQ: Using Microsoft Word's Track Changes Feature



Q. What is the Track Changes feature in Microsoft Word? And is it worth all the trouble to learn how to work with it?

A. This feature provides a means for editors and colleagues to communicate with you right within the document, proposing corrections and additions as needed. This feature is especially handy for identifying errors that inevitably occur in a piece of writing, such as typos. Even better, using Track Changes allows an editor to help create consistency within a report—especially helpful when a report is created by a group of researchers writing different sections at different times.

Q. How will I recognize an editor's markup?

A. Microsoft Word's default is set to display balloons in the document's margins that contain deleted text. You will likely see a horizontal line in the left margin as well. Further, text that was added is usually underlined.

Deleted: Like this one.

Deleted: while text that is deleted may appear crossed-out.

Sometimes an editor will want to draw the author's attention to portions of the text, such as confirming unusual spellings or terms, or requesting that the author verify that the proposed revision to a word or sentence does not introduce an error. In these situations, the editor will highlight the text in question and insert a comment asking for clarification.

Comment [MK1]: Let's hope it's politely worded.

Q. So what I do with the document now that it is all marked up?

A. Look over the changes and determine whether or not you agree with them. You can accept or reject the changes using either the Reviewing Toolbar or mouse options. Also, you'll want to read over any comments.

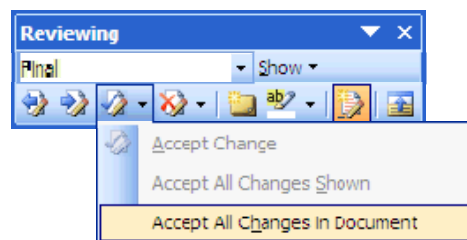
Q. How do I accept or reject a change made by the editor?

A. Both the accept and reject functions are available from the drop-down menu in the Reviewing Toolbar and as mouse options.

- To accept using the Reviewing Toolbar, simply choose **Accept All Changes in Document** from the drop-down menu under the Accept Change icon (the one with the blue check mark). As a shortcut, you can place your cursor on the change itself or on the balloon in the margin and right-click for the option to accept it.
- To reject, simply choose **Reject All Changes in Document** from the drop-down menu under the Reject Change icon (the one with the red X mark). As a shortcut, you can place your cursor on the change or on the balloon and right-click for the option to reject it. Note: you can also delete comments using these methods.

Q. I've reviewed all the changes and agree with all of them. How can I just accept all of them at once?

A. Simply choose **Accept All Changes in Document** from the drop-down menu under the Accept Change icon (the one with the blue check mark).



Q. I've reviewed all the changes and don't agree with any of them. Can I just reject all of them at once?

A. Simply choose **Reject All Changes in Document** from the drop-down menu under the Reject Change icon (the one with the red X mark).

Q. I've reviewed all the changes and agree with almost all of them, with only a handful of exceptions. What's the fastest way to proceed?

A. First, individually delete any changes you don't like by selecting them and choosing **Reject Change/Delete Comment** from the drop-down menu under the Reject Change icon (the one with the red X mark). Then choose **Accept All Changes in Document**.

Q. I've already accepted all the changes. Why are there markups still showing?

A. Well, Word is funny that way. Sometimes, after you have already accepted or rejected changes individually, you still need to hit **Accept All Changes** (or **Reject All Changes**) to finish up the process. We don't know why; it's one of Word's idiosyncrasies.

Q. I've addressed all the concerns in the Comments. How do I get rid of the comment boxes?

A. Place your cursor on the balloon and right-click for the option to reject it, or use the drop-down menu under the Reject Change icon on the Reviewing Toolbar.

Q. How do I view the file without seeing the markup?

A. You have two options here. You can choose your viewing option from the drop-down box on the left end of the Reviewing Toolbar (that's the Show Options menu).

- Choose **Final** to see the document as it would look if all of the editor's proposed changes were incorporated.
- Choose **Original** to see your original text, with none of the proposed changes included.

Q. How do I print the file without seeing the markup? OR How do I get all this markup off of my printout?

A. Before you print, make sure you have the viewing option of choice selected and showing in the Show Options box at the left end of the toolbar. To print with markup showing, choose **Final Showing Markup**. OR Choose **Final** to print the document as it would look if all of the proposed changes were incorporated.