

# Focus on MS Word – Use Track Changes efficiently

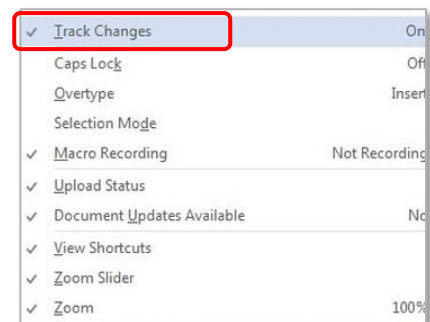
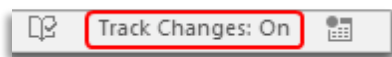
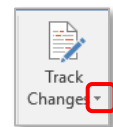
The Track Changes feature in Word can be very confusing, especially if the document contains more than one reviewer's comments, insertions, deletions or formatting changes.

Before the invention of word processors and the Track Changes feature in Word, documents were circulated as printouts and reviewers would use different coloured pens to make suggested changes in the margins, or score through text to delete it. The **Track Changes** feature is an electronic way of colour-coding edits and changes by different individuals. Any changes will be visible in a markup view (the default view is **All Markup**). You can see the other reviewers' suggestions and decide whether to accept or reject them. If you need a version history or want to collaborate with others, then use Track Changes.

## Switch Track Changes on

There are several ways to switch on Track changes:

- Click the **Review** tab, then click **Track Changes** in the **Tracking** group.
- Select **Track Changes** from the drop-down list. The icon's background is highlighted in grey to show it is switched on.
- Right-click the **Status Bar** and selecting **Track Changes** from the pop-up menu. Once added to the Status bar it will be displayed showing the status On/Off.



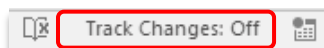
- Use the keyboard shortcut **Ctrl+Shift+E**



All methods act as a toggle to switch Track Changes on or off.

## Switch Track Changes off

- Click the **Review** tab, **Track Changes** icon in the **Tracking** group or
- Click on the **Track Changes** indicator on the **Status** bar.



**Lock Tracking** enables you to protect the tracking within the document with a password, ensuring that other reviewers cannot turn tracking off when editing the document. To prevent changes, click the **Review** tab, **Track Changes** option in the **Tracking** group and select **Lock Tracking**.

## Understanding different views

When Track Changes is switched on interpreting the different marks can be confusing, especially if there is more than one reviewer. As soon as a change is made, a different mark will appear in markup view.

### Original

This view will display the document as it appeared **before** any deletions, insertions, moves, comments or formatting changes etc. were made and will **not** display any revision marks.

### No Markup

This view displays the document as though all suggested revisions have been accepted. It is like a preview of how the document would look if all the suggested revision marks were removed.

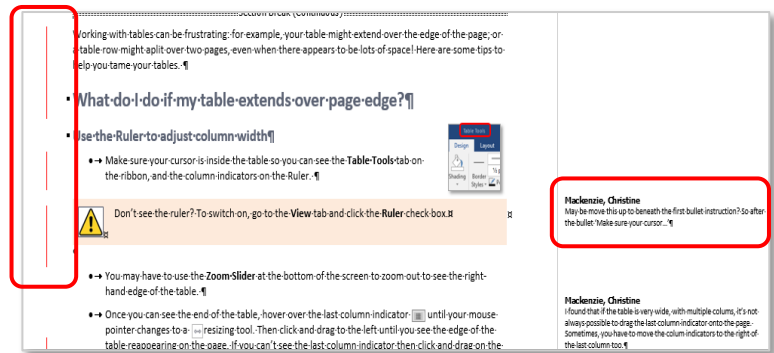


You must either **Accept** or **Reject** all the revisions in the document to switch off Track Changes revision marks. See [Deciding to Accept or Reject Suggestions](#).

### Simple Markup

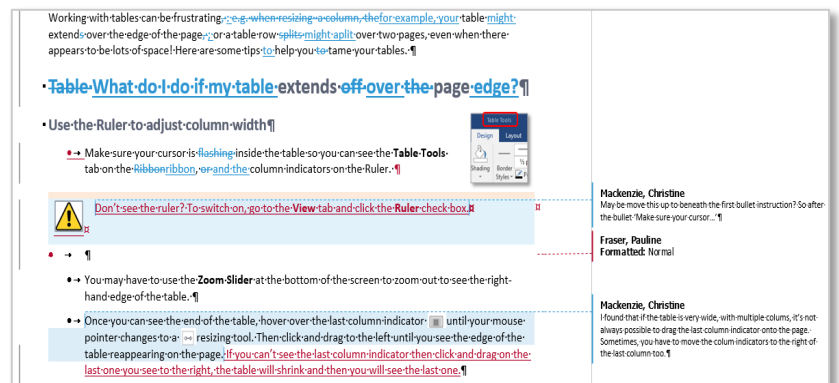
This view displays balloons in the right margin, containing reviewers' comments. **Red vertical bars in the left margin** indicate deletions or additions.

**Note:** You can left-click on a **red vertical bar** in the left margin to switch to the All Markup view. The vertical bar changes to grey. Left-click on the **grey vertical bar** to switch back to Simple Markup.



### All Markup

This is the default view. **All Markup** displays all suggested revisions from all reviewers. For example, if you delete text, it doesn't disappear; instead Word displays it using **Strikethrough** font. Word underlines **added** text and highlights formatting changes (with a comment in the right margin). If many people are reviewing the document, Word will designate colour-coding to each reviewer to identify who made each change. In our example, one reviewer is colour-coded in **blue** and the second reviewer in **red**.

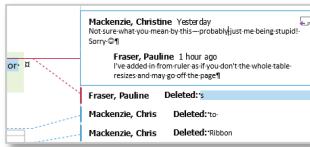


This view can be confusing and can make it hard to interpret revisions, but you can change the way you view them. There are two main options which will make it easier to work in markup view:

## Balloons

Click the **Show Markup** drop-down arrow in the Tracking section and click on **Balloons** to view the options:

– **Show Revisions in Balloons**



- This will display **all** revisions in balloons in the right margin.

– **Show All Revisions Inline**



- This will display revisions in line with the edits - **no** balloons will appear in the right margin.

– **Show Only Comments and Formatting in Balloons**



- This will display **only** comments and formatting changes in balloons in the right margin.

## Reviewing Pane

The Reviewing Pane makes it easier to see changes made in the document. It will show you the name of the reviewer and list the changes they made to the document. It includes a summary of the number of revisions. You can also use the Reviewing Pane to navigate to the reviewer's suggested revisions by clicking on the relevant one, then respond to a reviewer's comments directly from the Review Pane.

Switch on the Reviewing Pane

- Click the **Review** tab, then click the **Reviewing Pane** button in the **Tracking** group.

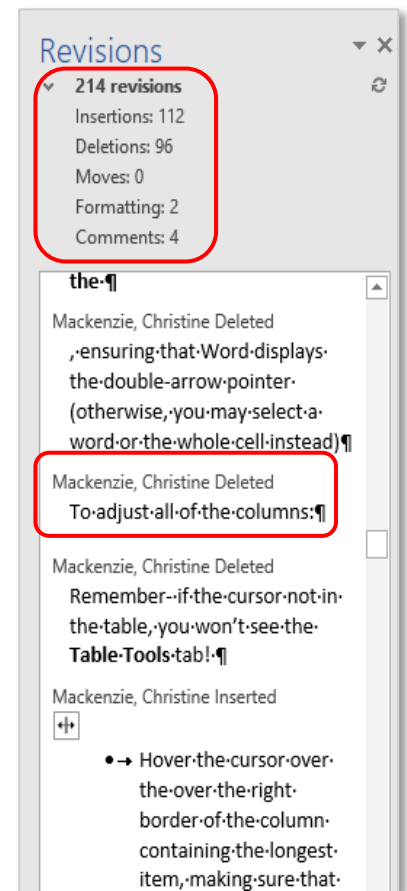
**Note:** By default, the Reviewing Pane will be displayed vertically and positioned to the left of the screen.

- From the Reviewing Pane button drop-down menu, choose either **Reviewing Pane Vertical** or **Reviewing Pane Horizontal**.

**Note:** The Reviewing Pane can be moved anywhere on your screen. Hold down the left mouse button at the top of the pane then click and drag to the desired position.

Switch off the Reviewing Pane

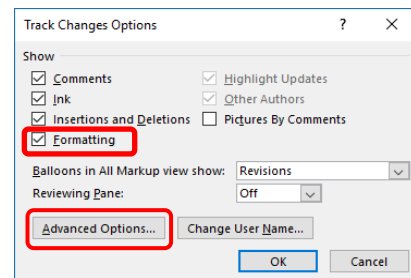
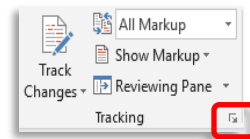
- Click the **Review** tab > **Reviewing Pane** button in the **Tracking** group
- or
- Click the **X** on the **Reviewing Pane**.



## Can I customise the Track Changes Options?

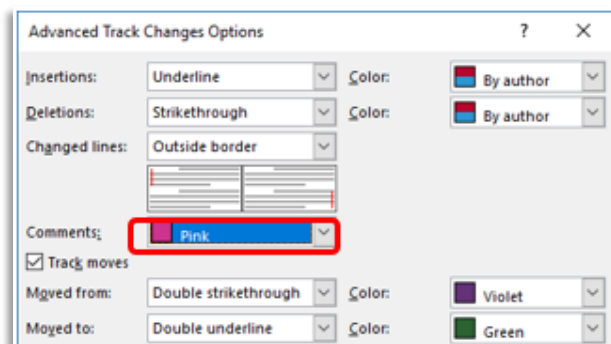
Yes, you can, even though most people never do, and don't have to. However, you may find that changing the options makes it easier to see any suggested revisions.

- Click the launcher for the **Tracking** group, found at the bottom right-hand corner of the group.
- The **Track Changes Options** window controls the display of revisions in markup view. In the **Show** section, click the checkbox(es) to switch an option off or on. For example, uncheck all the checkbox except **Formatting** to see **only** formatting changes.
- Click **Advanced Options**.



**Note:** Word will assign a different default markup colour for each reviewer, making it easy to track multiple contributors. You can choose a specific colour that's independent of the reviewer.

- Click on the drop-down arrow for **Comments**: and select the colour to display for balloons with comments, e.g. pink. Your comments will now have pink balloons.
- Click **OK**.



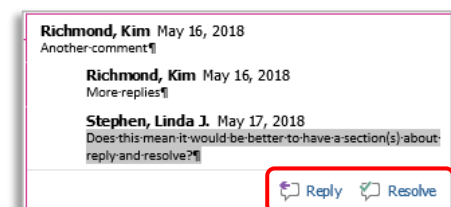
## Insert a comment

Use comments to suggest a change or to give more information.

- Highlight the word, sentence, paragraph or object where you want to insert the comment. Click the **Review** tab > **New Comment** in the **Comments** group.
- A new date/time stamped comment box will appear in the right margin displaying your **user name**. Type your comment and click back on the document text when finished.

## Reply or Resolve a comment

Use **Reply** when you want to respond to another reviewer's comment. Use **Resolve** when you want to keep a record of why a change was made, or when you want to mark the comment as done (but you don't want to delete it).



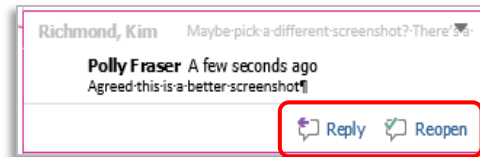
### Reply

- Right-click on the comment and select **Reply To Comment** and enter the reply.  
Or
- Click on the **Reply** from the Balloon or from the **Reviewing Pane**.

**Note:** A new date/time stamped comment box will appear in the right margin displaying your **user name**. Type your comment and click back on the document text when finished.

## Resolve

- Right-click on the comment and select **Resolve Comment** or
- Click on the **Resolve** from the Balloon or from the **Reviewing Pane**. The comment will get greyed out as a visual clue

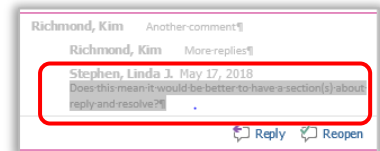
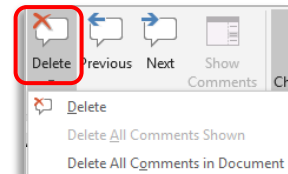


**Note:** You can **Reply** or **Reopen** a resolved comment. A new date/time stamped comment will appear in the right margin displaying your **user name** beneath the greyed out resolved comment.

## Deleting a comment

To delete a comment after it has been actioned:

- Place your cursor at the beginning of the document and click the **Next** icon in the **Comments** section of the **Review** tab.
- The cursor will move to the first comment. Click the **Delete** icon in the **Comments** section of the **Review** tab.
- Select **Delete** or choose **Delete All Comments in Document**.

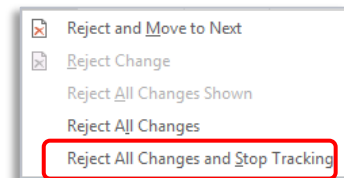
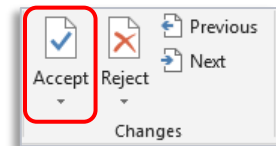


## Deciding to Accept or Reject suggestions

You **must** deal with all the revisions in a document either by accepting or rejecting them. If you don't, comments, revision marks, formatting, insertions and deletions will be displayed in your document and will print. Work through the document and make a decision about each one.

To accept or reject changes

- Click on the revision you want to accept or reject.
  - From the **Review** tab, click the **Accept** or **Reject** command.
  - When you accept or reject a change the revision will disappear in **Simple** or **All Markup** view and Word will automatically move your cursor to the next revision. You can continue accepting or rejecting each revision until you have reviewed them all.
- You can also accept (or reject) all changes at once:
- Click the **Accept** drop-down arrow, then select **Accept All Changes**. If you are happy with the reviewer's suggestions and want to finish tracking changes, you can select **Accept All Changes and Stop Tracking**. You can reject all revisions in the same way.



**Note:** You can use the **Previous** or **Next** buttons to navigate to the next change and review the revisions before deciding to accept or reject.

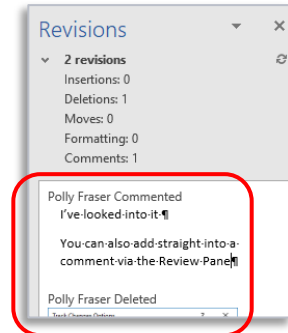
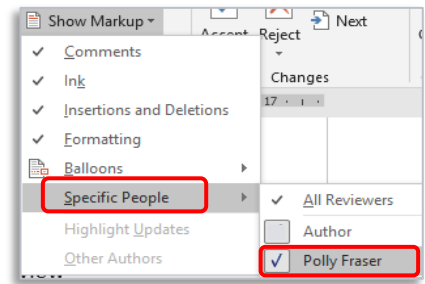


Remember to switch **off** Track Changes and save your file!

## Concentrating on Specific People

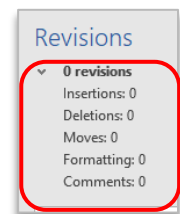
If the document contains many reviewers' changes, it can be challenging to work through them all. To make things easier you can focus on one (or more) of the reviewers' suggestions.

- Click the **Show Markup** drop-down arrow in the **Tracking** group.
- Click on **Specific People**.
- Uncheck **Author**. In our example, Word will display only edits from the reviewer **Polly Fraser** in **Simple Markup** or **All Markup** view.
- Use the buttons in the **Changes** group to decide whether to accept or reject the changes:
- Click the **Accept** drop-down arrow and choose **Accept All Changes Shown**.  
This will accept **all** of Polly Fraser's revisions.
- Use the same method to reject revisions.



**Note:** If this option is greyed out, you are currently displaying all types of markup, or viewing all reviewers. You must **deselect** one (or more) of the checkboxes in the **Show > Track Changes Options** or **Show Markup** drop-down menu in the **Tracking** group, then select the **Specific People** you want to focus on.

- When you're finished, click the **Track Changes** command or click on the **Track Changes** indicator on the **Status** bar to turn off Track Changes.
- Save your file.



If you have selected a specific person(s) you might not see comments made by them to which you have replied. In order to see them, you would have to select **Show Markup** in the Tracking group > **Specific People** and select **All Reviewers**.

## Further information and help

Are you looking for help with Word? Please contact the IT Service Desk: <https://myit.abdn.ac.uk>