

Focus on MS Word – Use Track Changes efficiently

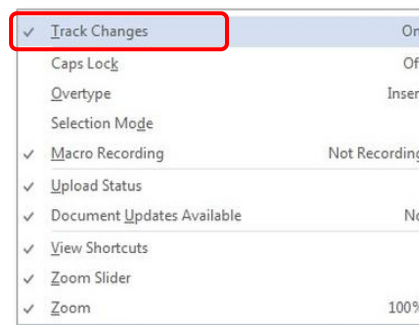
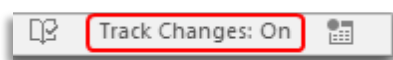
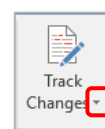
The **Track Changes** feature¹ is an electronic way of colour-coding edits and changes made to a document by different individuals. Any changes will be visible in a markup view. You can see the other reviewers' suggestions and decide whether to accept or reject them. Track Changes is very useful if you need a version history or want to collaborate with others.

However, the Track Changes feature can be confusing, especially if the document contains more than one reviewer's comments, insertions, deletions or formatting changes, so this guide will explain the mysteries of 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.



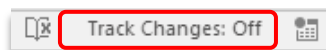
- Use the keyboard shortcut **Ctrl+Shift+E**



All the methods described above will toggle 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**.

¹ This guide describes the Track Changes feature using the desktop version of Word for Microsoft 365. Features will be more limited in the browser version of Microsoft Word.

Understanding different views

With Track Changes is switched on, interpreting the different marks can be confusing especially if there is more than one reviewer. Different markup views are available - as soon as a change is made, a different mark will appear depending on the 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 revisions were implemented.



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 red vertical bars in the left margin to 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.

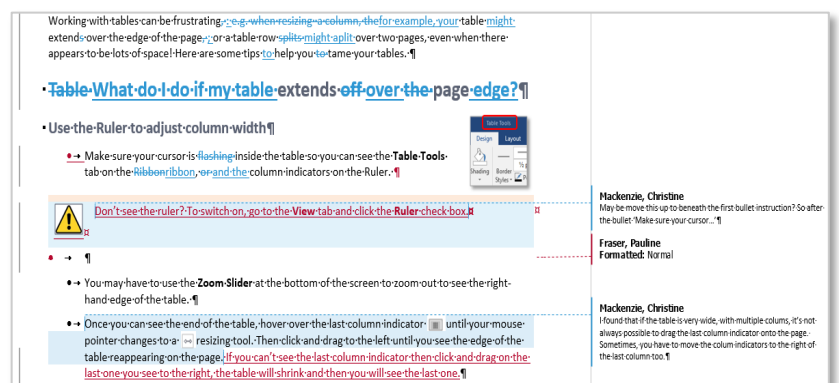
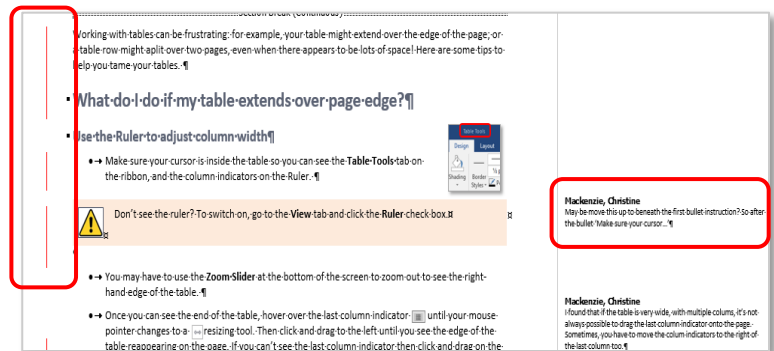
All Markup

This view displays all suggested revisions from all reviewers. For example, if you delete text, it doesn't disappear; instead Word displays it using **Strikethrough** effect on the text. 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:



All the settings described above can be modified, so the descriptions above are the defaults. Settings may be different on your own computer. See [Can I customise the Track Changes Options?](#) on page 4



Balloons

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

– Show Revisions in Balloons



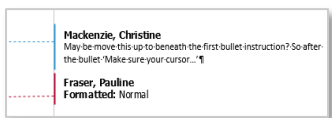
- This will display **all** revisions in balloons in the right margin.

– Show All Revisions Inline



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

– Show Only Formatting in Balloons



- This will display **only** 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 any changes made. It includes a summary of the number of revisions. You can also use the Reviewing Pane to navigate to the reviewer's suggested revisions. Click on the relevant one then respond to the 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 **Markup** group.

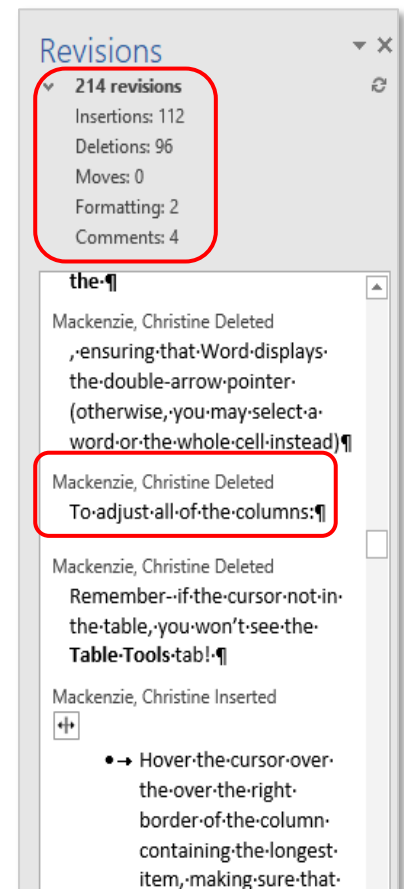
Note: By default, the Reviewing Pane will be displayed vertically and positioned to the left of the screen.

- 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. Hover the mouse over the area to the top of the pane until you see a four-headed arrow, 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**.



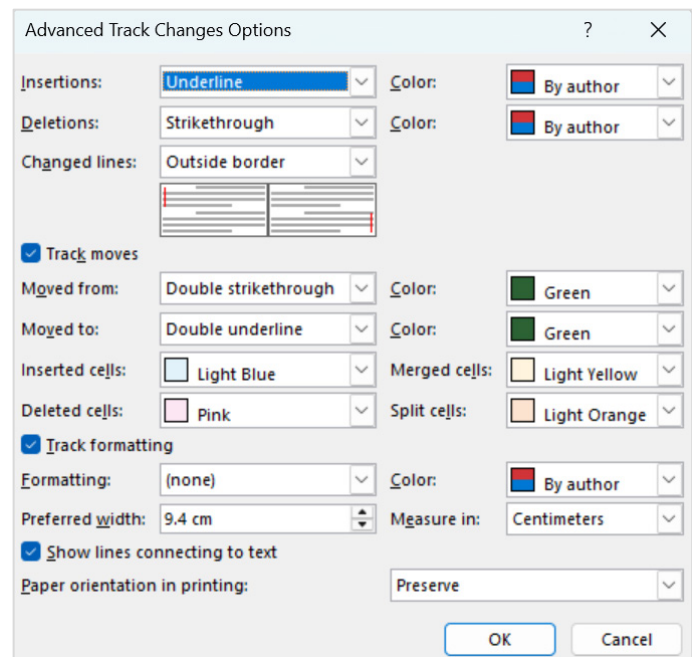
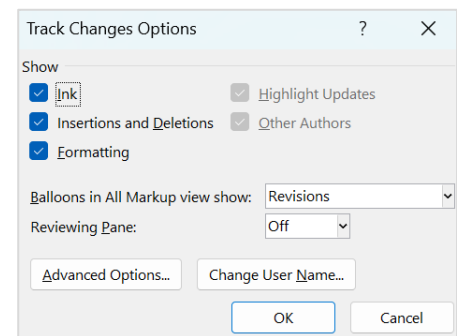
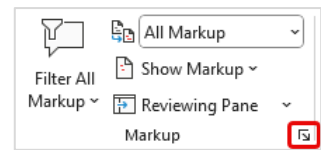
Can I customise the Track Changes Options?

Yes, you can, even though most people leave the default setting as they are. However, you may find that changing the options makes it easier to see any suggested revisions.

- Click the launcher for the **Markup** 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: By default, Word will assign a different default markup colour for each reviewer, making it easy to track multiple contributors but you can choose a specific colour for markups that applies, regardless of the individual reviewer.

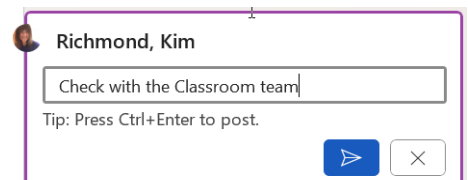
- Select the options you want.
- Click **OK**.



Insert a comment ²

Use comments to suggest a change or to give more information. (see footnote 2)

- Highlight the word, sentence, paragraph or object where you want to insert the comment. Click the **Review** tab > **Comments** > **New Comment**.
- A new date/time stamped comment box will appear in the right margin displaying your **user name**. Type your comment and click the **Post Comment** button in the comment box (or press **Ctrl + Enter**).
- A comment bubble icon appears at the right margin beside the commented text



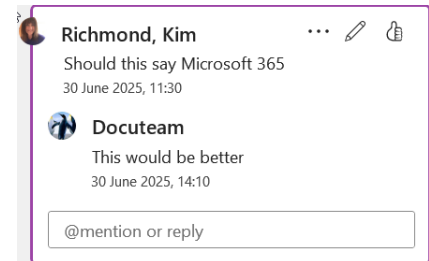
² Word for Microsoft 365 uses the Modern Comment experience, as described in this guide. Older versions of Word use the Classic Comment experience so not all features will appear as shown in the guide.

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).

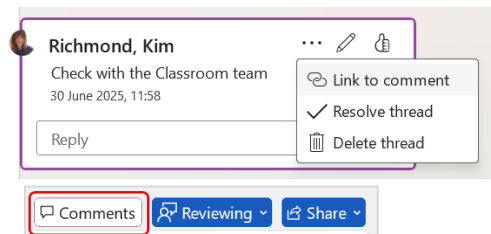
Reply

- Click on the **Reply** field in the comment box.
or
- Right-click on the comment to display the shortcut menu and select **Reply To Comment**.
- Enter the reply in the Reply field of the comment.
- Click the **Submit** button when done.



Resolve

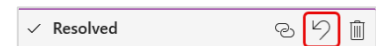
- Click the three dots (ellipsis) in the comment box and choose **Resolve thread**.
- In the Modern Comment experience, resolved comments disappear from view **but are not deleted**. To view them:
 - switch to the Comments pane by clicking the Comments button at the top right of the document window



(the comment bubble in the margin will also display with a tick inside it)



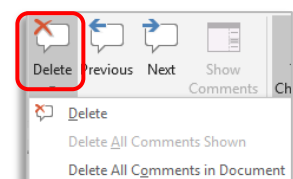
Note: You can reopen a resolved comment by clicking the resolved comment bubble in the margin - the comments pane will display the resolved comment with a Reopen button in the title bar.



Deleting a comment

To delete a comment after it has been actioned:

- Click the comment bubble in the margin to highlight the comment.
- Click the **Delete** icon in the **Comments** section of the **Review** tab.
- Select **Delete** or choose **Delete All Comments in Document**.

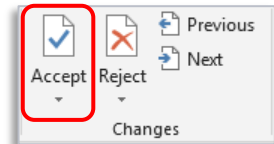


Accepting or Rejecting suggested changes

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.

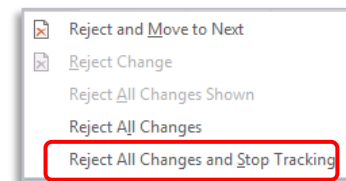
To accept or reject changes

- 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.

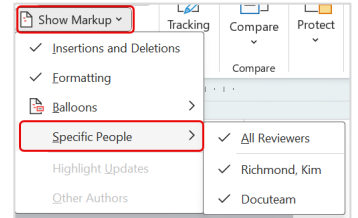


Remember to switch **off** Track Changes and save your file!

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 **Markup** group.
- Click on **Specific People**.
- Uncheck the name(s) of any reviewer whose changes you don't want to see..
- Accept or reject the changes as described on page 6



Final Steps

- 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 Markup 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>
- If you want to learn about any Microsoft product in more detail you can use [Microsoft 365 help and learning](#) for tutorials, videos and helpful hints

–