

How to Accept or Reject Tracked Changes and Comments in Word



Image Credit: Agence Olloweb on Unsplash

Track Changes is a function in Word that enables you to see what an editor has done to your text. You can then accept or reject their changes with the click of a button.

Why would you want to do that?

Most publishers need to see what errors and alterations have occurred so they can allocate the costs of changing them to the appropriate department – typesetter or copyeditor. On hard copy, typesetting errors are marked in red ink, while things missed by the copyeditor tend to be marked in blue.

Independent clients, however, usually don't have such costs to consider. Despite that, it's good to see what sort of problems

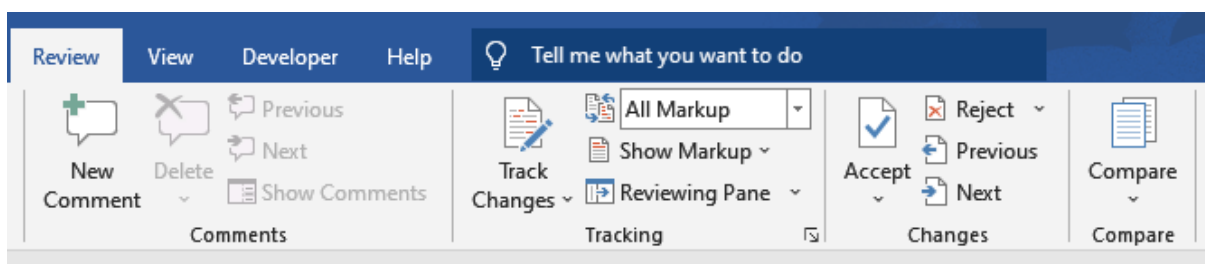
have cropped up and, who knows, there might be some recurring patterns of errors worth knowing about.

It's also useful to know what the editor is actually charging for!

At the start of a project, client and editor usually agree that certain changes can be implemented 'silently' without using Track Changes. Such elements might include taking out double spaces, spaces before commas, extra line spaces, or manual tabs, which should really be stripped out as they can interfere with later typesetting programmes and add extra spaces.

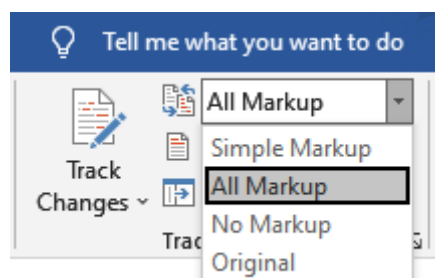
Where is Track Changes?

Track Changes lives in the Review tab, in the area marked Tracking:

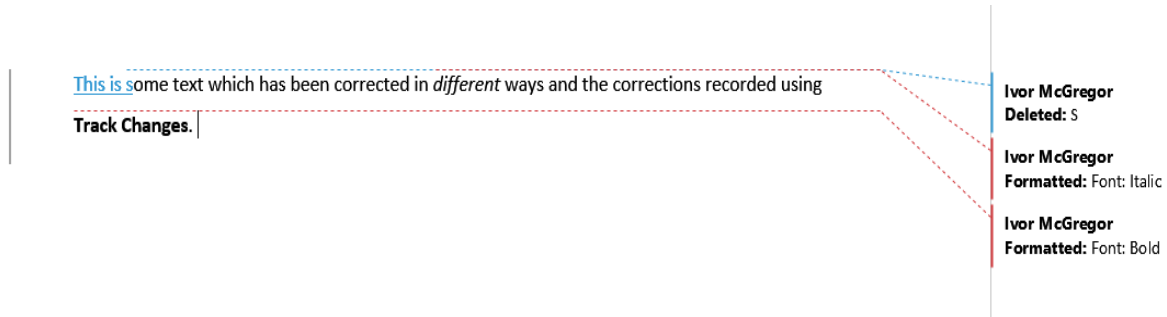


This is Word 2019, but it is the same for most versions except 2003 (and earlier) where you will find it under the Tools tab and in the drop-down menu.

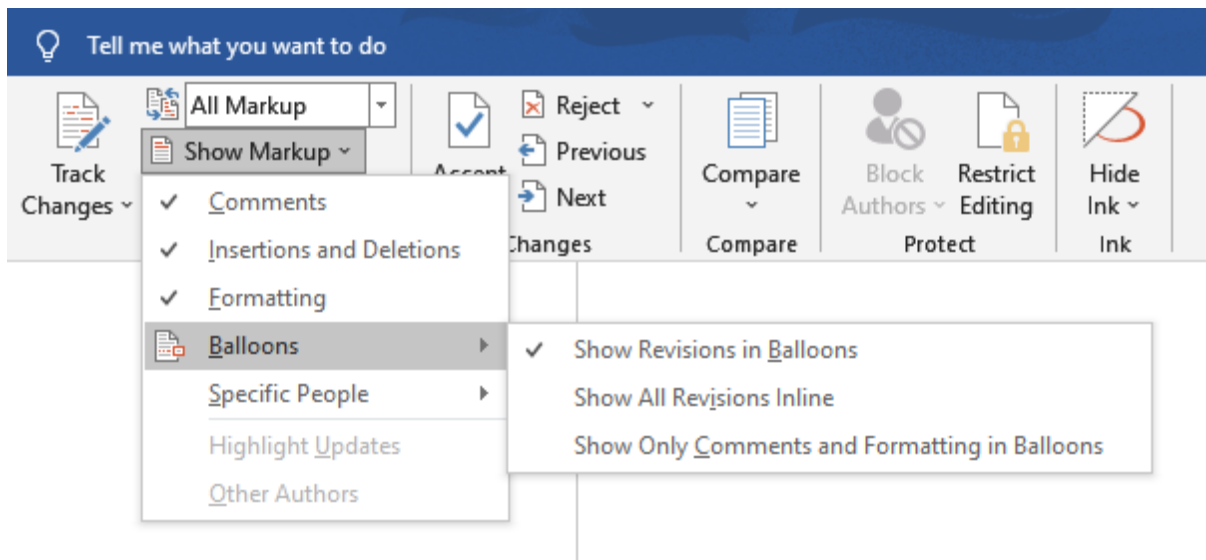
Make sure that All Markup is switched on:



Clicking on the Track Changes button means that all changes to the document (made from that point on) will be recorded by means of balloon comments on the right, lines down the margin or coloured letters in the text itself.

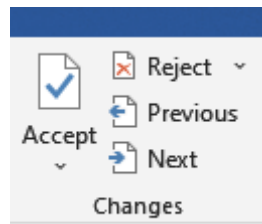


To ensure that you are seeing it like this, go to Show Markup and put a tick by 'Show Revisions in Balloons'. You could show all revisions in the text itself (inline), but they're not all immediately obvious that way.



How to start accepting or rejecting changes

Put the cursor at the start of your document. Switch the Track Changes button off (in case you wish to add text) then click on Next:



This will take you to the first change that has been tracked. Press Accept or Reject, as you wish. Continue this process until all the changes have been dealt with.

To delete a comment (in a balloon) you can either do it as above, or right click on the comment and select 'Delete Comment'.

For Word 2003 and earlier you will find the Accept/Delete buttons in a toolbar at the bottom of the ribbon when you click on Track Changes. They're not immediately obvious, but go by the tick and the cross marks.



If you're having trouble seeing this, click on View, Toolbars and tick Reviewing.

This process is simpler than it looks, but if you have any questions, do get in touch.

Ivor McGregor July 2022