



Track Changes Tips

When students email papers to the Writing Center for review, tutors provide feedback using inserted comments or track changes.

1) **Inserted comments.** To insert comments, the reviewer selects “Insert” from the top toolbar, and then selects “Comments.” A colored box with a number appears, and a bar at the bottom of the page opens up for the reviewer to type a message or a correction. To read the comments, scroll the mouse over the number until a window pops up with the comment in it, or from the toolbar at the top, click “Insert, Comment” again, and all of the comments will show up at the bottom of the page.

2) **Track changes.** To turn the track changes feature on, double-click the letters “TRK” at the bottom of a Word document. Doubling clicking TRK will turn the light grey letters to black, indicating track changes is turned on. Another method of turning the feature on is to select “Tools” and then “Track Changes” from the top toolbar. Once the feature is turned on, any changes a reviewer makes show up in a comment balloon or in a different color font. In most cases, the reviewer can delete a word or words and the words will appear crossed out.

One can choose to use balloons for suggested changes or to see the changes in the text, for example a crossed out word and the newly suggested word in a different color. To choose the setup, including what colors changes will appear in, go to Tools/Options/Track changes, and either select “always” or “never” in the box for using balloons. See the selection of colors above the balloon section.

To get rid of the delete or comment balloons in the margins of the paper, right-click on a delete or comment balloon, making sure you have read and agree with the suggestion. A menu will pop up and offer the option of accepting or rejecting the deletion. Select the appropriate option; the balloon will disappear and the computer will automatically make the change.

To get rid of suggestions typed into the paper in a different colored font, highlight the area and go to the toolbar icon with a blue checkmark (on the top toolbar after the Track Changes feature has been turned on). Click on this icon, and the computer will automatically make the suggested change. If there is more than one change, you may need to click on the area more than once.

To keep a section of your paper as it is and NOT accept the suggestion, highlight the selection and click on the red “X” (reject change). The computer will automatically delete the suggestion and leave your text as it is.

Be aware that sometimes when you accept a change, a new change has been made that you did not desire; for example, a period may have been highlighted inadvertently, and once you accept the change, your sentence will no longer have a period.

Another way to accept or reject proposed changes is to turn off the track changes feature (either double-click the “TRK” at the bottom or go to “Tools,” and click on Track changes.” Cull through the paper and retype, delete, or add your own edits.

A tip for accepting and rejecting changes: For easy comparison of your original draft and the draft with the tutor’s suggestions, you may prefer to open two windows and go through both documents at the same time. To do this, open the original document and minimize it. Manipulate this window so that it takes up about half of your screen (vertically). (You can do this by clicking the middle box in the very upper right hand corner of your Word document. Go to one edge of the document and place the cursor over it until you see a two-way arrow appear. Then, click your mouse and drag the edge to where you want it. Do this for each side until the document is placed according to your preference.) Open the copy of your paper with the tutor’s comments on it and position it so that it sits on the opposite half of the screen.

You may want to ALWAYS put your original draft on the right side of the screen and the edited draft on the left so you don’t become confused as to which is which.