



## Microsoft Word's "Track Changes" function (2003 version)

### What are These Red Lines on my Manuscript?

"Track Changes" is a handy function of Microsoft Word, and The Pen uses it when editing electronic documents. Track Changes tracks *every* change: every space inserted, every word deleted, every change in formatting. It allows your editor to make comments about specific parts of the text. It even allows multiple editors/authors to make changes to a document, tracking different editors' changes in different colors.

### How to Use Track Changes:

In the tool bar at the very top of your screen, you'll see a tab titled "Tools." Click on the "Tools" menu, you should see "Track Changes." (You may have to click on "Track Changes" twice; The Pen has an older version of Word, and I have to click twice.) Control+Shift+E also activates this function.

After turning the function on, you'll notice, below Word's normal tool bar, the Track Changes tool bar. It will display a small white screen, a pull-down menu that starts with "Show," and several buttons with blue arrows and red "X"s.

**Any additions or insertions** you make in the document will appear in underlined red text. (The text color may vary depending on options you specify and which user makes the change, if there are multiple editors/authors.)

**If you delete** a portion of the document, a balloon containing the deleted text will appear in the right margin with a dotted line connecting it to its original location in the document.

**Try hovering your cursor** over a deleted or added piece of text. Right click. You'll notice an option of accepting or rejecting the insertion/deletion. This is why Track Changes works so well for editors: if you, the author, disagree with a change the editor made, you can simply reject it. If you agree, accept it.

**This can get time-consuming** for a book-length manuscript, and—you guessed it!—there is a short cut. Among the small icons in the "Track Changes" tool bar is a white square with a blue arrow pointing to the right. This skips ahead to the next change. Beside it is an icon with an arrow pointing to the left. This skips to the last change.

**Skip to the next change.** Then click on the white square with the blue check mark. This accepts the change. Had you clicked on the white square with the red "X," you would have rejected the change, leaving the text as it had originally been.



Even this can skipping ahead and accepting or rejecting can be time-consuming. If you look at the “Accept change” icon, you’ll notice a small black arrow to the right side. Clicking on this will reveal a pull-down menu with the option of “Accept all Changes in Document.” Ditto for the “Reject Change” icon.

**You must either accept or reject all changes** to get rid of the “Track Changes” flotsam.

### **Comments**

**To make a comment**, simple highlight with your cursor the text in question, and click on the icon showing a yellow file (next to the “Reject Change” icon). You can type a comment in the bubble that appears at the right of the screen. If you’d like to respond to a comment that has already been made (something that I find to be a nice way of communicating about specific text), simply click on the bubble and type what you like. I prefer to put my initials at the end of my comments, to alert authors to whom is making the comment.

**Comments may be deleted manually**, by hovering your cursor over them, right-clicking, and choosing to “delete comment.” The “Reject Change” pull-down menu will give you the option of deleting all changes in the document. I encourage authors not to delete comments until all editing, rewriting, etc. is complete. Your editor will refer to those comments for future reference.

### **Views**

**There are several ways of looking at an edited work.** The first option of the “Track Changes” function gives you the option of looking at “Final,” “Final Showing Markup,” “Original Showing Markup,” and “Original.” I generally use “Final Showing Markup” for proofreading and most editing, but I like “Final” when doing a close edit for typos.

Experimenting with the “Show” menu also provides some viewing options.

Finally, if you look to the very top of the screen, to the “View” option in the original Word toolbar, the “Print Layout” option seems to work best.