Alexis Grewan
BA (Social Work) Hons
Clean copy, on time, makes sense.
www.alexisgrewan.co.za

Word Track Changes and Comment functions

Track changes

1. The track changes function in Word documents makes editing changes visible to the author. You know there are track changes when you see the red line on the left of the Word document. [To switch this function on, before editing starts, the editor selects 'Review' in the top ribbon and 'Track Changes'.] When you receive the edited document, you can then see that the editor used this function.

2. For you to see the changes, click on the red line in the left margin. The changes show up in red inside the body of the text (if multiple people have worked on the document, there may be additional colours – see image below). To hide the changes again (which makes the document easier to read), click on what has become a grey line down the left margin.
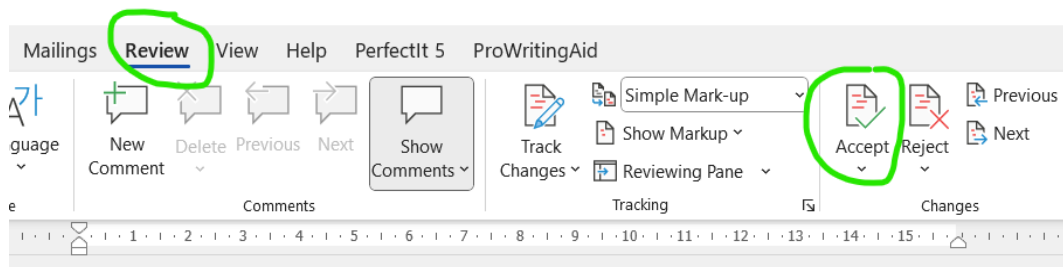

Accepting the changes:

You need to check that you agree with the changes made. If you agree, then do the following:

a. Highlight the area of text that you agree with.
b. Select 'Review' in the top ribbon.
c. Click on 'Accept'.
d. Continue working through the document to accept all the edits you agree with.

Rejecting the changes:

If you do not agree with something the editor changed, you can reject their intervention. To do this, you follow the first two steps as noted above (highlight text you want to keep unchanged, click on 'Review') and then you click on 'Reject'. Word will make sure that your original writing is retained.
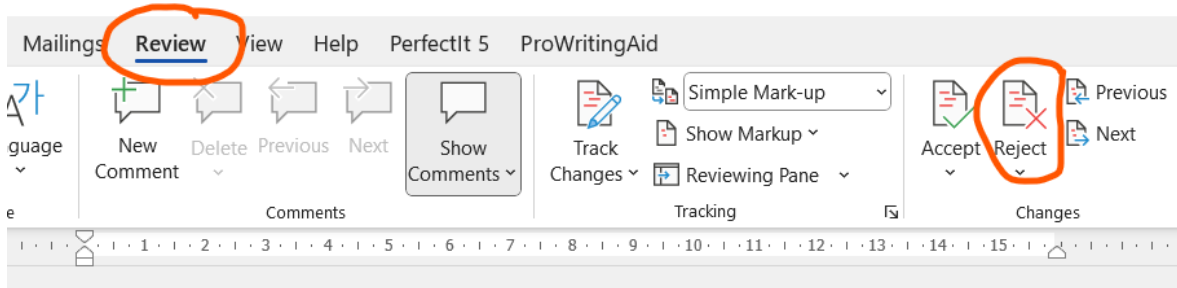
Comment function

The comment function in word is important for editors and authors. It is used to ask questions, clarify understanding or make notes about aspects of the document. This is useful for editors and authors if they need to bring attention to something but don't want to type in the body of the document. To insert a comment, do the following:

a.   Select the text related to the comment or place your cursor at that point.
b.   Right click to open a dropdown box.
c.   Select 'New Comment' and a text box will appear on the right of the page.
d.   Type your comment or question where it says 'Start a conversation' and select the arrow to ensure the comment is inserted into the document.
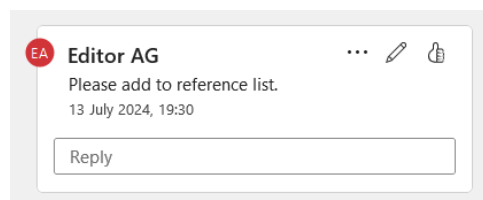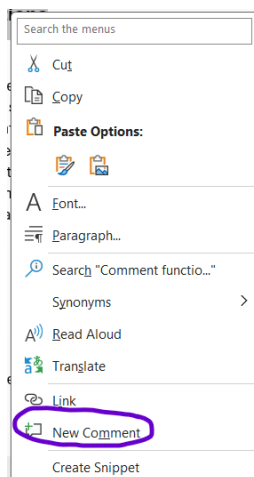
Managing comments:

Editors use the comment function a lot to make sure that they understand your needs and do not change what you want to convey. You can respond to comments in various ways:

- If you need to answer a query because the document is going back to the editor, you can type your response where it says 'Reply'. Remember to select the arrow so that it is posted.
- If you have followed the suggestion and the comment is resolved, you can click on the three small dots in the right corner of the comment box, which gives you options in a drop down box, two of which will probably be the most used:
  - 'Delete thread': select this to remove the comment box from the document.
  - 'Resolve thread': In some cases, you may want the editor to see that you have done what they suggested. You can then select 'Resolve thread'. This leaves the comment in the document. The editor can then delete it.
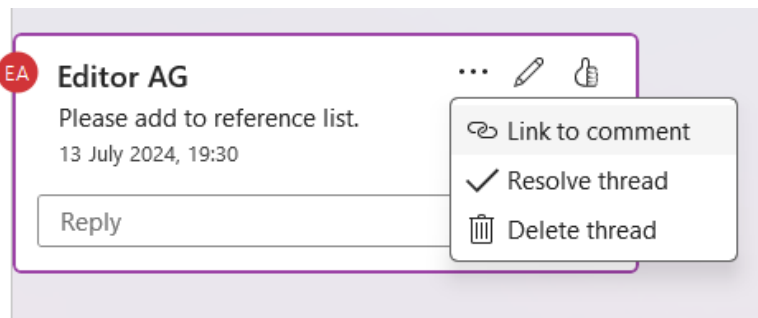

- If you want to see all the comments to make sure you have not missed anything, go to 'Review' in the top ribbon, select 'Show comments' and then 'List'. All comments in the document will be displayed in a column on the right.
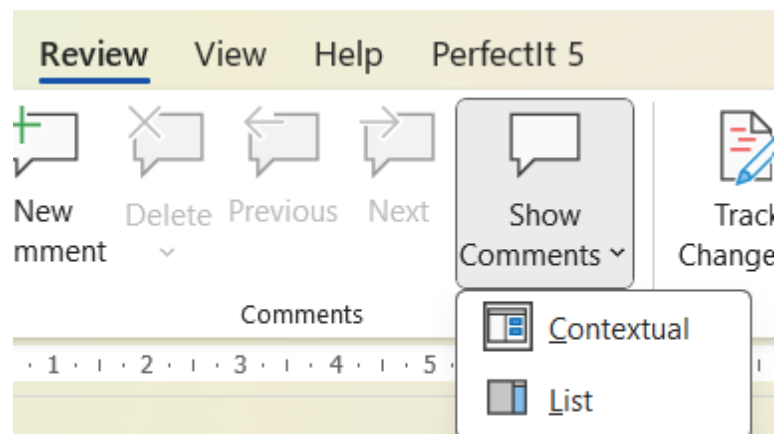
To review all comments and revisions

If you want to see the comments and revisions at the same time, you can do this by selecting 'Review' in the top ribbon. Then click on the 'Reviewing pane' drop down and select vertical list. If there are comments and track changes in the document these will show up in a panel on your screen. You can use the 'Show comments' and 'List' functions to have the revisions on the left and the comments on the right. Click the small cross in the corner of each panel to close it.
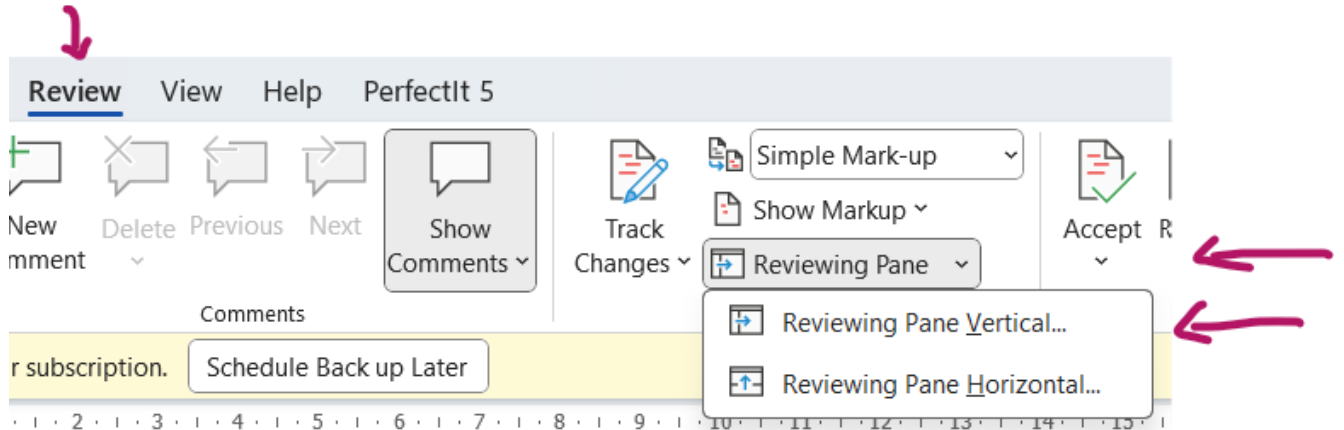
NOTE: It is important that you work systematically through the editing. Do not assume that all the editing is correct or to your liking. To uphold your integrity as the author, pay attention to each and every edit made and work through all the comments.