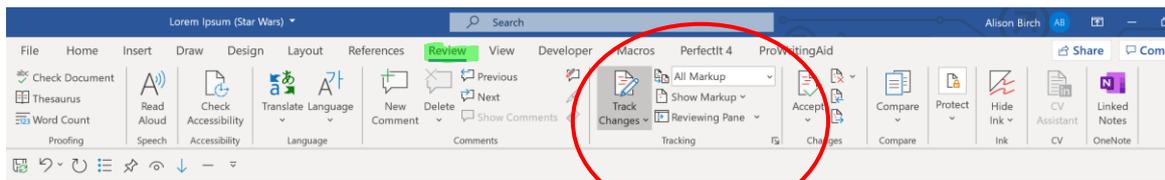## How to Use Tracked Changes in Microsoft Word

Like most editors, I return my clients' edited documents in Word format with Tracked Changes. This allows you to see exactly what I've done; it's vital that you have the opportunity to think about each suggested change and consider whether it works for you. It's your work, after all, and you should always have the final say!

Viewing Changes

When you receive the edited file, if there are only a few changes, I'd recommend looking at it in 'All Markup' view. Go into the Review tab and select 'All Markup' from the dropdown menu:
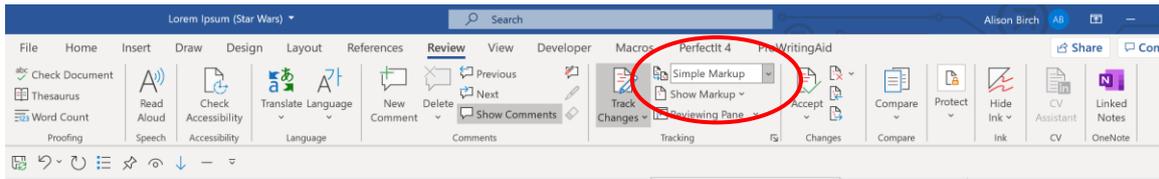

All the changes will be marked up – suggested deletions will have a line through them, suggested insertions will be underlined, and text that's been moved will have a double underline. Comments will be displayed in the margin.

Using All Markup is the easiest way for you to see all the changes at a glance, and to see the scale of the task that lies ahead – but if there are more than a couple of changes per paragraph, it doesn't always make for an easy reading experience and it's easy to miss things like missing spaces or punctuation. In that scenario, Simple Markup view is your friend:

All the changes are still there, and the comments remain visible in the margin, but the changes are hidden so that you can assess the overall flow better without being distracted by all that red markup. It's also much easier to check that, for example, there's a space before each sentence, and that you don't have any duplicated punctuation marks.

Accepting and Rejecting Changes

As you're going through the revision process, you can accept or reject each change individually in one of two ways. Firstly, this is what would happen if you right-clicked on the 'that' I deleted on the second line:
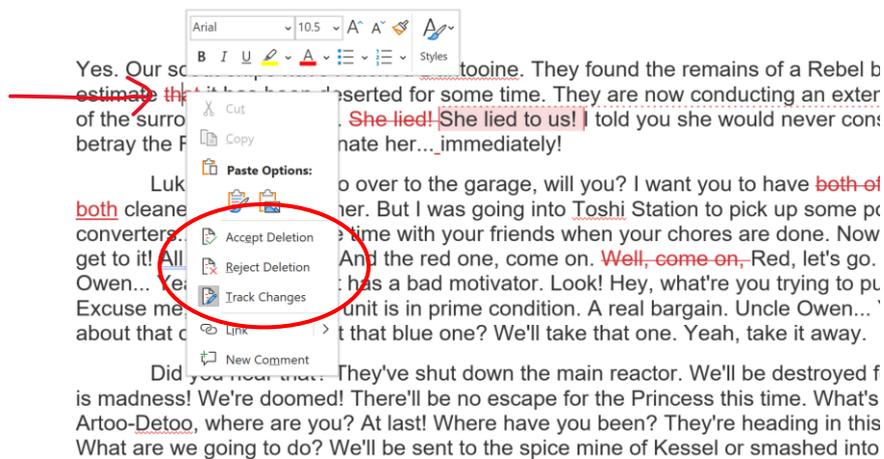
You get a context-specific popup menu that includes options to 'Accept Deletion' or 'Reject Deletion'. Select one of those options, and Word will either permanently delete that pesky 'that' or will revert to your original; in both cases, it will remove the tracking for that change.

Alternatively, you can head up into the Review tab in the top toolbar and accept or reject changes from there. To accept a change, select it and then click on Accept. You'll see a range of options:
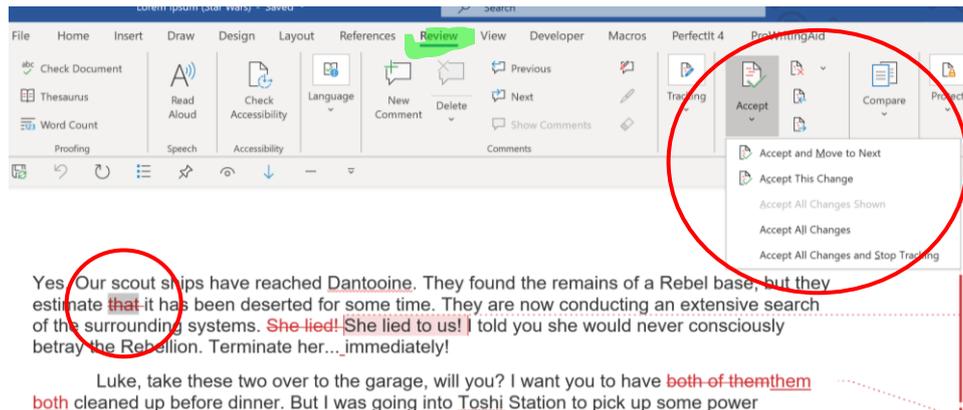
Be aware that selecting 'Accept All Changes' does exactly that, and you will lose all the tracking; your document will now be the same as if your editor had just changed it all without giving you a say! If there are lots of changes and you're happy with most of them, then that can be a quicker option than accepting each one individually; just go through the document rejecting anything you don't want to implement, then click 'Accept All' at the end for everything else.

To reject a change, the process is similar:
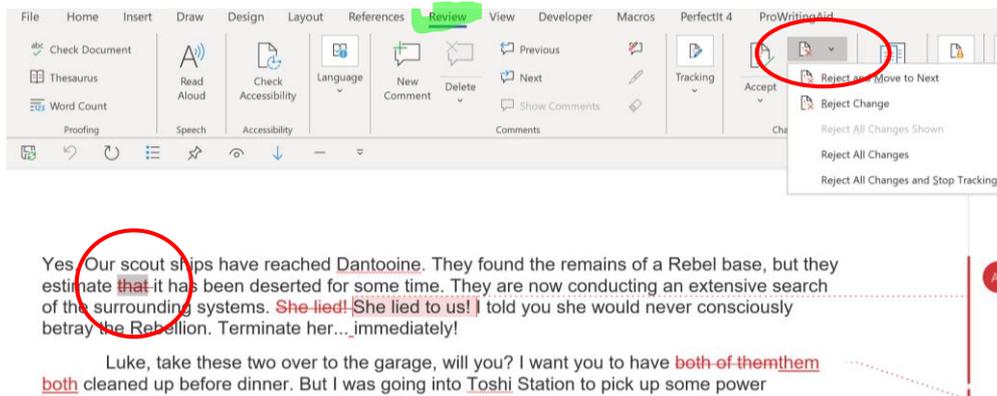
Be careful not to choose 'Reject All Changes' by mistake – thereby undoing hours of painstaking editorial graft – but if you do, Ctrl+Z should restore them!

Remember: the editor is on your side. They will almost certainly have made some changes that should be 'set in stone' – for example, correcting misspellings, typos and grammatical glitches – but as for the rest, it's up to you. If your editor has made other suggestions, it's because he or she believes they will enhance your work, either technically or artistically, but you always have the final say. Your writing is just that – yours!