Using the Reviewing Toolbar in Microsoft Word

The reviewing toolbar is useful when you want to make comments on another person’s paper. You can mark up the paper with strikethroughs and additions and can also write more substantive comments that appear either in the margins or as pop-up boxes. If multiple individuals are reviewing the same paper, each reviewer can make his/her comments and changes in a separate color. When you are reading a paper that has been reviewed by someone, you can easily accept or reject that person’s various changes/suggestions with a click of the mouse.

In Microsoft Word, select “Review” in the main toolbar to see the following at the top of your screen:

Making Edits

To make edits to a paper, simply click on the button above “Track Changes” to change it to “ON”. Now everything you type will appear in a different color. To choose the color, click on the reviewing toolbar button labeled “Show Markup” and choose “Preferences.” You will get the following dialog box:

If you click next to “Color,” you can select the color you want. Below, my changes appear in blue.

Under the “Tracking” section, you will see the following choices for how you can view the document:

I typically choose “Final Showing Markup,” which allows me to see what the final version of the paper will look like, along with all the changes a reviewer has made.
Accepting/Rejecting Changes Made By a Reviewer

To accept a change made by a reviewer, simply highlight the appropriate section of text and click on the “accept changes” button on the toolbar. The text will now reflect the changes made by the reviewer.

To reject a change, click on “reject changes”. The text will now revert back to what the author originally wrote, ignoring the reviewer’s recommendations. You can also click on the check mark or X in the balloon (in the right-hand margin of the page) to accept or reject a change, respectively.

Example

Imagine that I am writing a paper here, and that I have written the following:

William James (1890) noted that self-esteem is simply a ratio of one’s successes to one’s pretensions. More than 100 years later, social psychologists began studying contingencies of self-worth, and found that, indeed, individuals’ senses of self-esteem are dependent upon those domains of importance.

Let’s say that a reviewer made some changes/suggestions:

William James (1890) noted that self-esteem is simply a ratio of one’s successes to one’s pretensions. More than 100 years later, Crocker and Wolfe (2001) began investigating contingencies of self-worth, and found that, indeed, individuals’ senses of self-esteem are dependent upon the domains they deem most important to their self-concept, such as success in school.

The “Comments” Feature:

In addition to simply marking up the text, you can also use the reviewing toolbar to make more substantive comments. To do so, simply click on “New” in the “Comments” part of the toolbar and type your comment.

There are two different ways to view the comments. If you go to “Show Markup” and “Preferences” again, you will see the following in the bottom of the “Track Changes” dialog box (also shown above):

(1) If you do NOT click the box next to “Use balloons…”, you will need to hold your mouse above a particular part of the text to see a comment pop up in a separate window there.

(2) If you DO click the box next to “Use balloons…”, the comments will appear in the margins of the document. This feature can be handy, but it also puts all of the text edits into the margin as well, as shown below: