

Track Changes in MS Word

Track Changes is an extremely useful function built into MS Word. It allows an author to review every change an editor has made to the original document and then decide whether to accept or reject all of them, none of them, or to accept/reject each one individually. The editor's comments can be handled in much the same manner.

From the Review Toolbar, the author can also examine either the Original or Final version of the document, with or without displaying the editorial Markup.

This makes it an ideal tool for an editor who wishes to communicate clearly and ensure that the author has ultimate control over the finished product.

The Track Changes function in this software has been available at least since the introduction of Word for Windows (1995) — almost from the beginning, in other words — and it has always operated essentially the same way: Go to the View tab and click it; then move your cursor to Toolbars in the drop-down menu and turn on the Review Toolbar. From there, you'll be able to make all the decisions we just discussed. Or you can simply right-click any individual correction in the text in order to bring up these options.

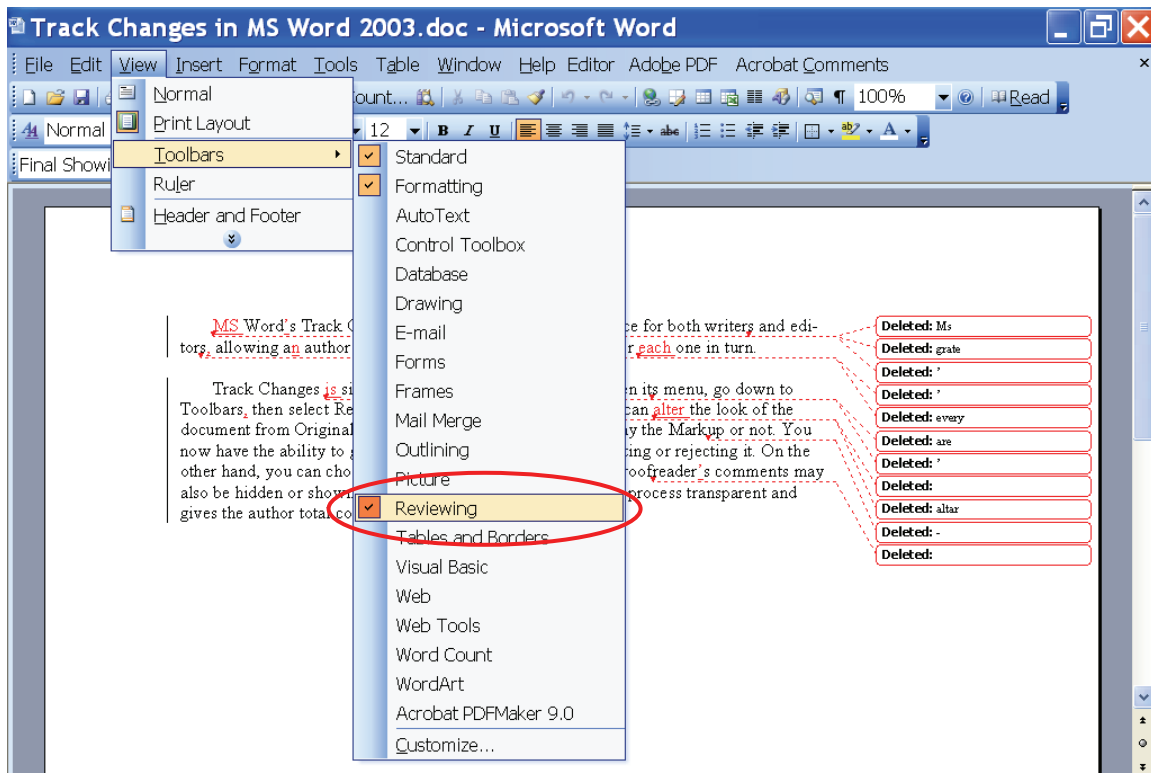
It works the same on a Mac, too. (In fact, the Review Toolbar in MS Word for Mac 2011 looks nearly identical to the one described below for MS Word 2010 for Windows.)

A few changes in appearance (and more) have occurred over the years, however. The biggest came in 2007 when Microsoft introduced the Ribbon. This didn't alter the basic functioning of Track Changes, but it did transform the way things look.

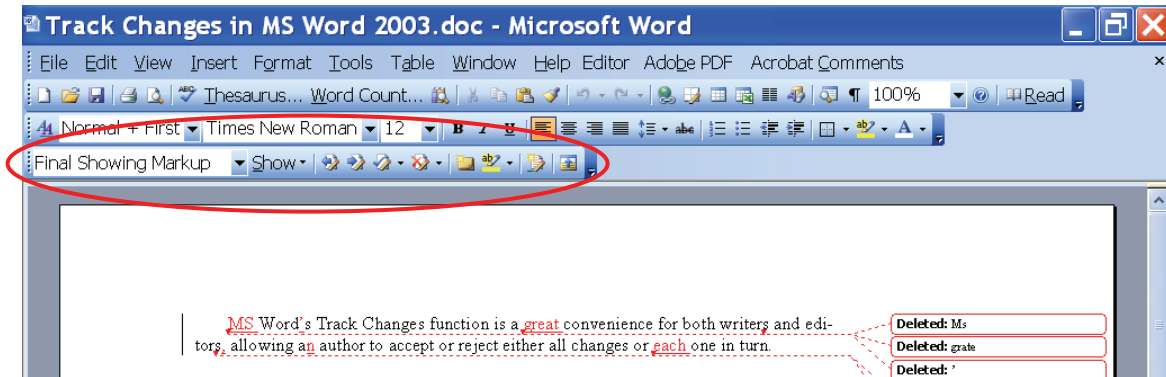
That's why we selected a *before* and *after* version of the program to show you. For your convenience, we've provided illustrations of how Track Changes operates in both MS Word 2003 and MS Word 2010.

MS Word 2003

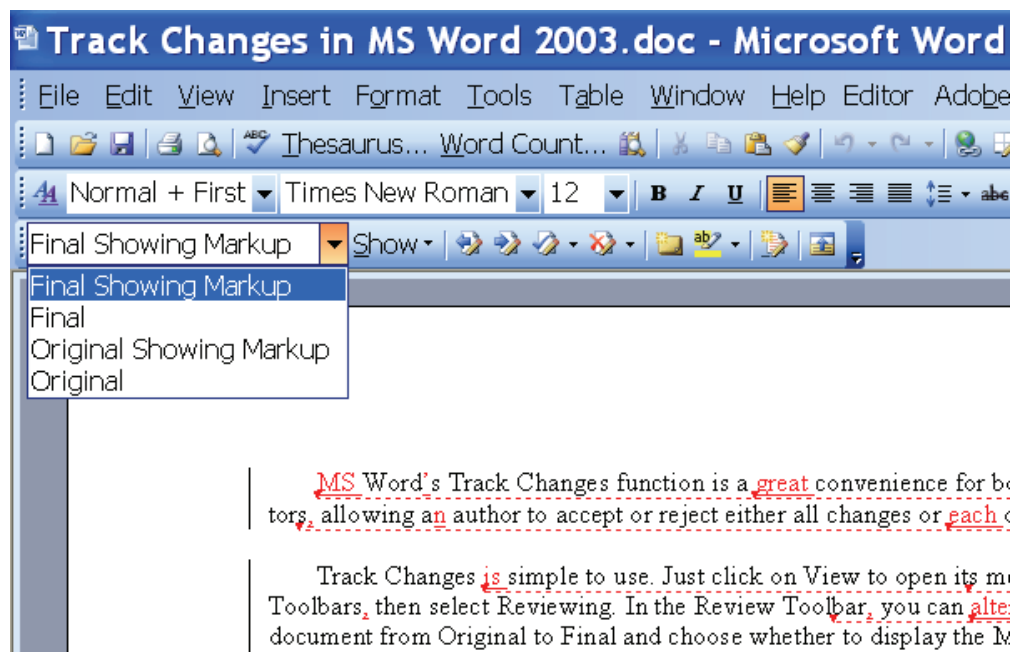
Open a document in MS Word. Go to the View tab at the top and click it. Move your cursor down to Toolbars, then on to Reviewing. Click that to turn it on.



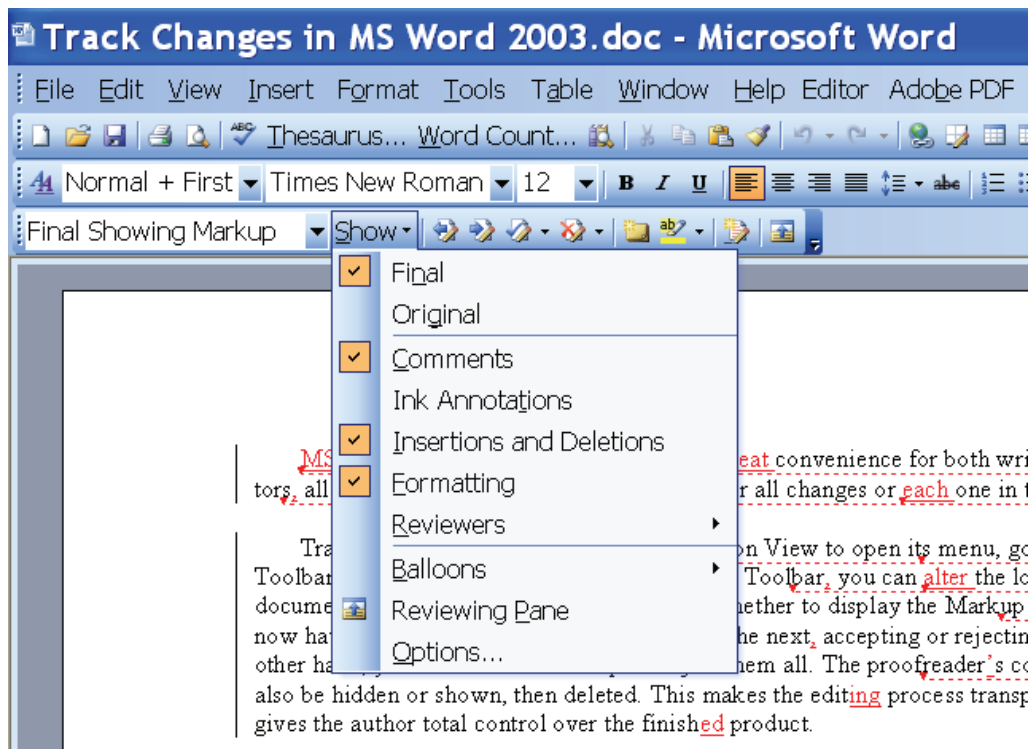
The image below shows the Review Toolbar.



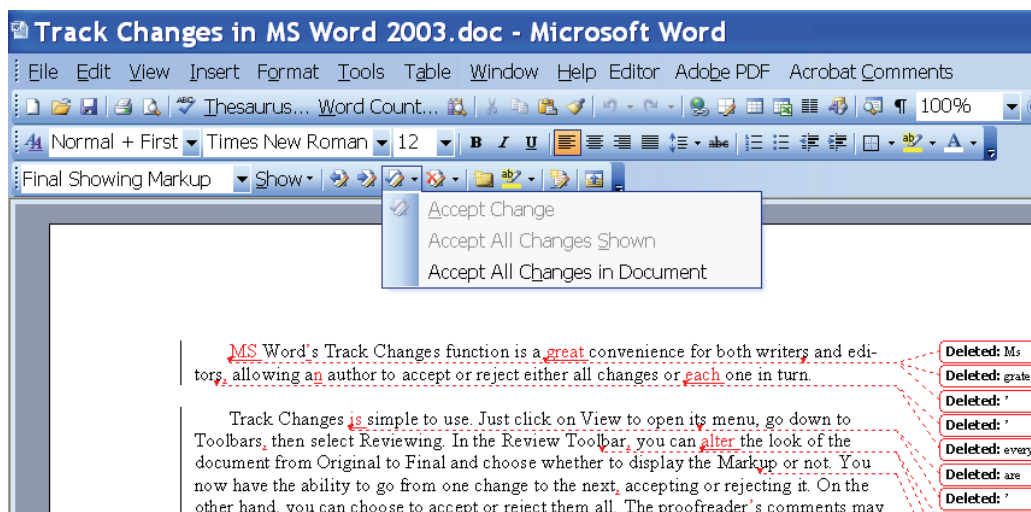
The arrow to the right of the first column allows you to decide how the document will be displayed. You can select the Final version Showing Markup (editorial corrections that have been made) or the Original version Showing Markup. You can also select either one without showing the editorial corrections. Selecting Original will display the document just as it was prior to editing. Selecting Final will display the document exactly as it will appear if you accept all the changes made to it.



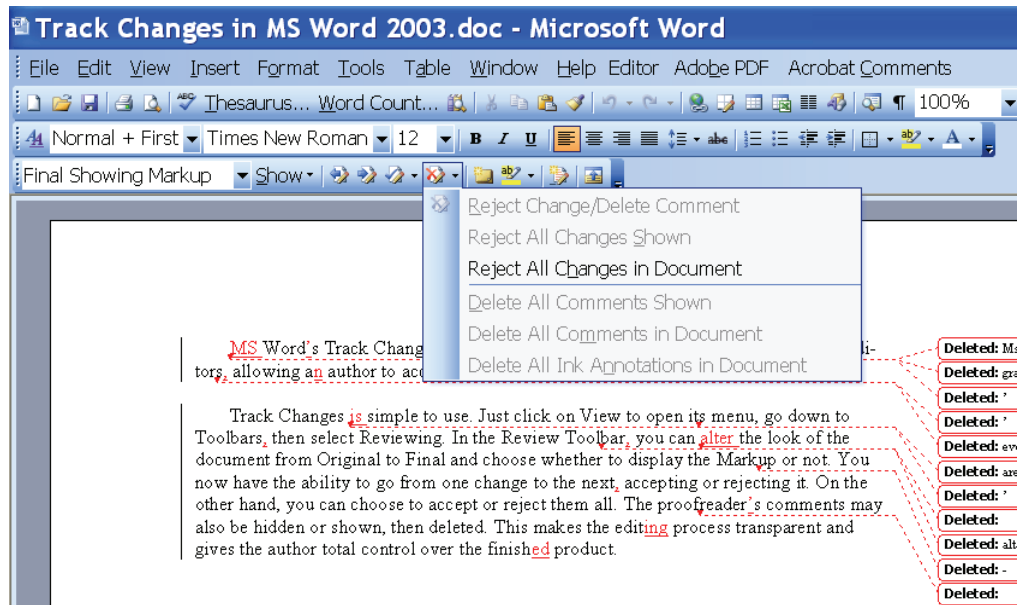
The arrow to the right of the second column allows you to decide precisely which items will be shown in the Markup.



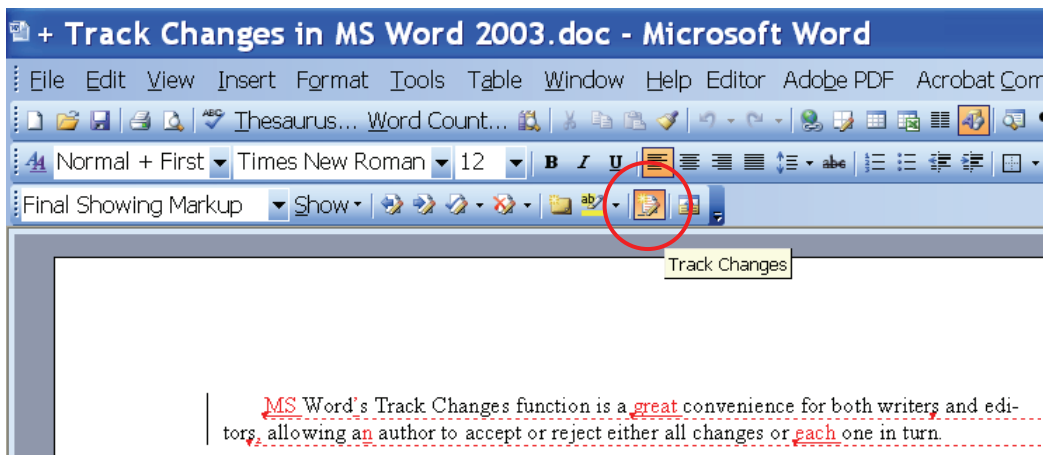
From here, you can accept one change by clicking the button or all of them by choosing that option from the drop-down menu.



From here, you can reject one change by clicking the button or all of them by choosing that option from the drop-down menu. You can also delete one or all of the comments in the same way.

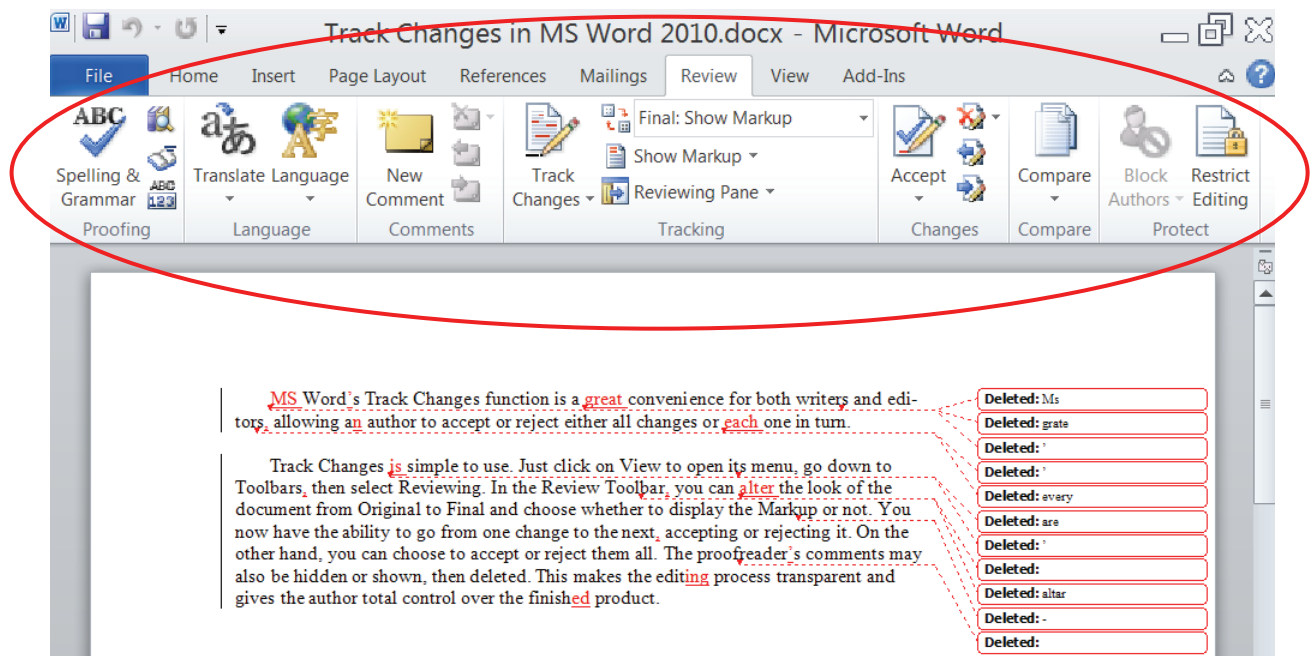


If you don't intend to track any new changes that you might make, be sure to turn off the Track Changes button. When it's illuminated (as it is in the image below), it's turned on.

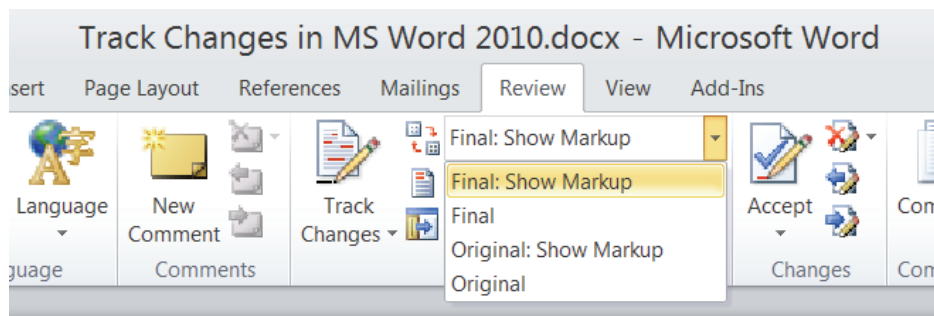


MS Word 2010

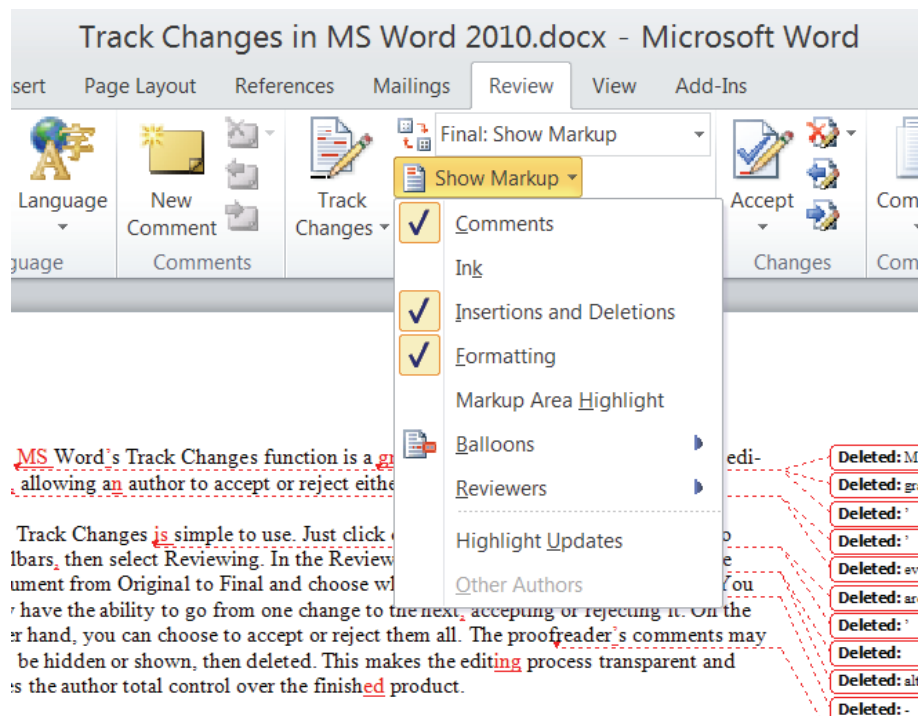
Once you've opened a document in Word 2010, this is where the Review tab is located and what the corresponding toolbar looks like.



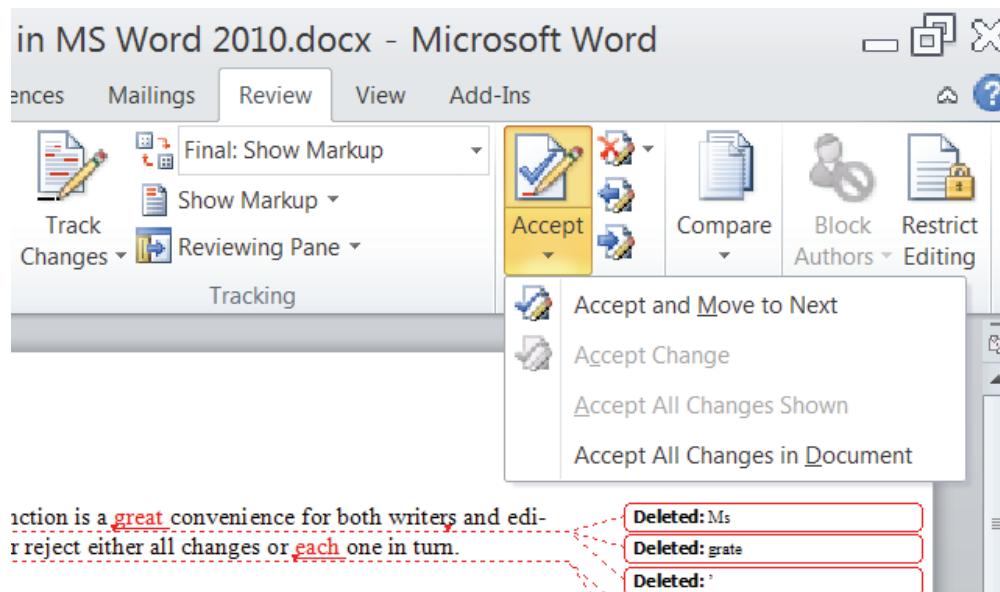
The arrow to the right of the first item directly under the Review tab allows you to decide how the document will be displayed. You can select the Final version and Show Markup (editorial corrections that have been made) or the Original version and Show Markup. You can also select either one without showing the editorial corrections. Selecting Original will display the document just as it was prior to editing. Selecting Final will display the document exactly as it will appear if you accept all the changes made to it.



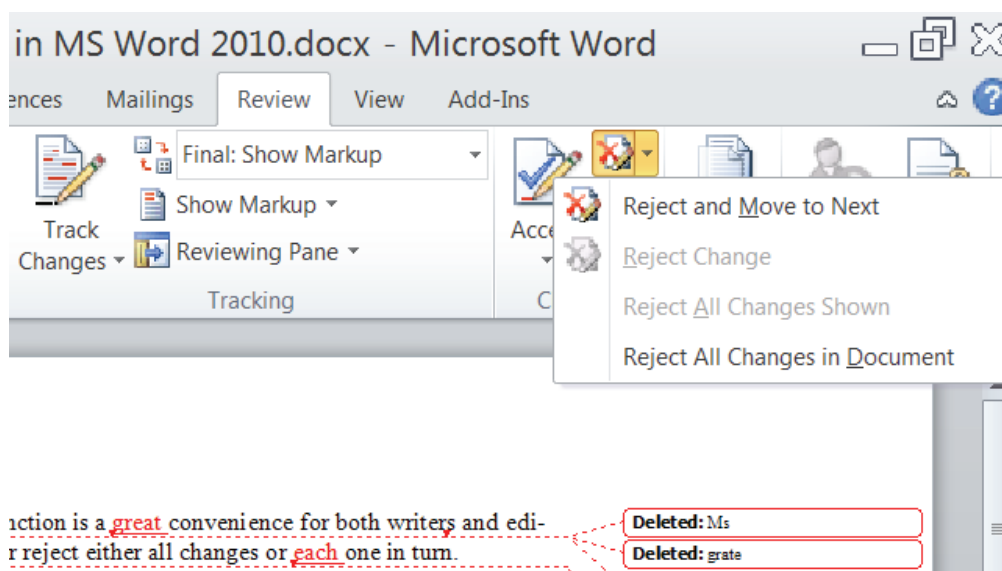
The arrow to the right of the second item directly under the Review tab allows you to decide precisely which items will be shown in the Markup.



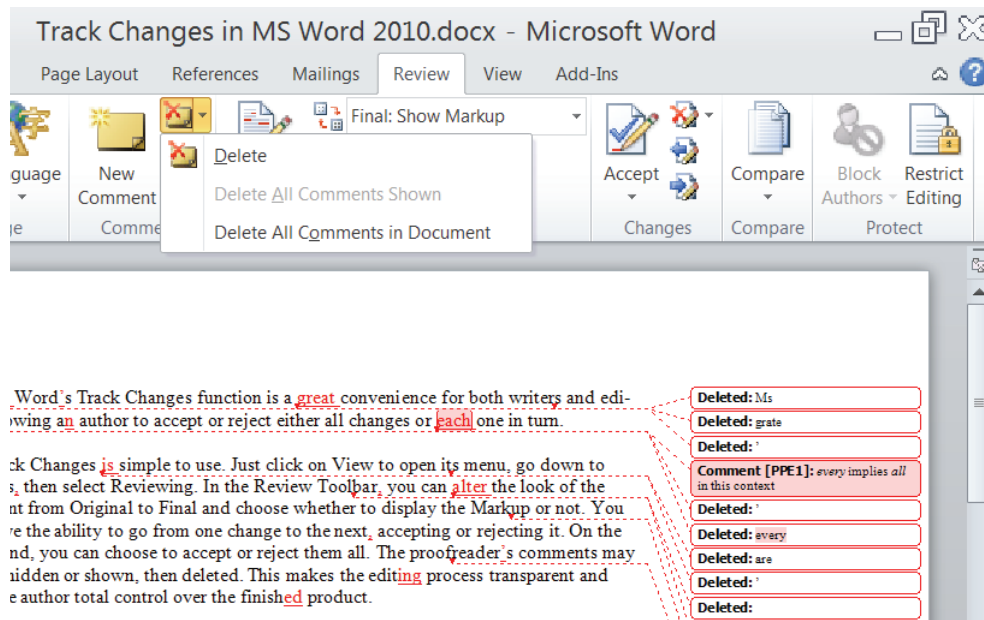
From here, you can accept one change by clicking the button or all of them by choosing that option from the drop-down menu.



From here, you can reject one change by clicking the button or all of them by choosing that option from the drop-down menu. (In this version of Word, comments must be handled from the Comments section of the toolbar.)



From here, you can delete comments individually or all at once.



If you don't intend to track any new changes you might make, be sure to turn off the Track Changes button. When it's illuminated (as it is in the image below), it's turned on.

