This Jing video will guide you through what the end product of an Email session will look like. It will explain the Writing Assistant’s procedure and how to interpret the comments you receive.

Comments are the Writing Assistant’s way of drawing your attention to particular places in your paper. They are suggestions for revision to help clear up issues with thesis statements, organization, clarity, formatting, spelling, grammar, sentence structure, and word choice. You can direct the Writing Assistant’s attention to specific concerns with the sign-up form that you submit with your paper. If you’re unsure of what you need assistance with, please reference our handout for “Commonly Used Revision Terms” located on the Writing Center’s website.

In order to view the comments, be sure that the changes can be seen in Word. In this video, I am using the Mac 2011 version of Word. The settings for this version can be found under the review tab located at the top of your screen. Under this dropdown list, you want “final showing markup” to be selected. If you want, you can also enable the review pane to show on the left. In Word 2013 on PC, you can access the same settings under the review tab. Instead of “final showing markup” as you see here, you will make sure that “all markup” is selected in the dropdown list under the “tracking” settings.

Now I will walk you through a sample paper to view some comments that students commonly receive from us.

In the first comment, the Writing Assistant addresses APA formatting. She gives the standard format for the title page and also indicates that she will attach an APA handout to the Email. The comments will often contain supplemental resources for you to review later on. These can be handouts from the Writing Center or links to external websites like the Purdue OWL. They help by providing in-depth information and visual aids for revising.

Further into the paper, in comment 4, the Writing Assistant discusses the use of direct quotes with the student. The Writing Assistant takes care to explain why a change is necessary and how to move forward. Often, the Writing Assistant will highlight one example of a certain error. If she notices it again later in the paper, her initial comment will include the words “see throughout,” as shown in this comment. This should signal to you, the writer, to take the information provided by the Writing Assistant and apply it to similar errors throughout your paper.

The Writing Assistant will also ask you questions for you to engage more with your work and develop your skills as a writer. For example, in comments 5 and 8, the questions ask the student to clarify information and to consider restructuring sentences to be more direct.

If the comments are unclear, or you are unsure of how to proceed after receiving comments, please let the Writing Assistant know. At any time, the Writing Center is available to assist you with questions or concerns regarding these submissions. Please visit our website for contact information.