Track Changes Advantages:

- The level of feedback can range from comments providing simple qualitative overall feedback on the whole document or on selected paragraphs or sentences, to very detailed feedback on individual words or phrases.
- The other side of 'track-changes' is where deletions, additions, replaced words or phrases can be suggested.
- the feedback sent electronically
- You can send the edited work back to any student at any convenient time or place as you're assessing their work, rather than having to wait till a whole batch of work is returned.
- You have the opportunity to edit your feedback before you finally send it.
- Students can open the marked work at a time and place when they're ready, and usually choose to take in your feedback in the relative comfort of privacy.
- You can tailor your feedback to individual students' needs, strengths and weaknesses.
- Students can refer back to your feedback again and again.
- You can keep track of student revisions by saving the marked-up files.
- You can use electronic cut and paste where different students need similar advice, gradually preparing a master copy of a bank of frequently needed comments to select from, and save yourself having to type out such messages more than once.
- Students can reply directly to you *about* your feedback.
- Comments on-screen can be far more legible than handwriting, and can still clearly point to the exact part of the student's work being discussed.
- By using Track Changes, you'll also start to amass a bank of essays to use as sample essays for future semesters.

Track Changes Disadvantages:

- If there are lots of comments and changes, the feedback can look very intimidating and confusing ('like an overly-critical spider's web' is one reaction!).
- Students (and yourself!) may need a little practice before getting into the swing of using track-changes well.
- Some students may be using different software to that which you're using, or have different versions of the same software. Some students may be using quite different kinds of computer (e.g. Mac versus PC).
- Students without their own computers may have limited access to networked computers, and may then be somewhat rushed when they have opportunities to receive your feedback.