

## Draft

Draft is available online. It lacks most of the features of other writing apps, but is especially useful for the early stages of writing. The app includes three important features that support our recommendation of it: “Hemingway mode,” automatic saving of major drafts, and side-by-side comparison of drafts. Draft’s Hemingway Mode disables the user’s ability to edit their document. Writers can only move “forward” in their writing—the backspace and delete keys are disabled. Apart from effectively eliminating distractions, Hemingway mode also teaches writers to draft without editing (and can show a user how much time during the drafting process they waste fixing minor spelling and grammar errors).

Draft automatically saves all “major drafts.” What constitutes a major draft is based on the amount of change that occurs between one draft and another. Edits will cause the app to save, as will added verbiage (regardless of where the words have been added). This automatic saving connects with the possibility of side-by-side comparison of drafts. Major drafts and collaborative edits can be compared with the app (one draft appears on each side of the screen; a column in the middle points out differences between the two).

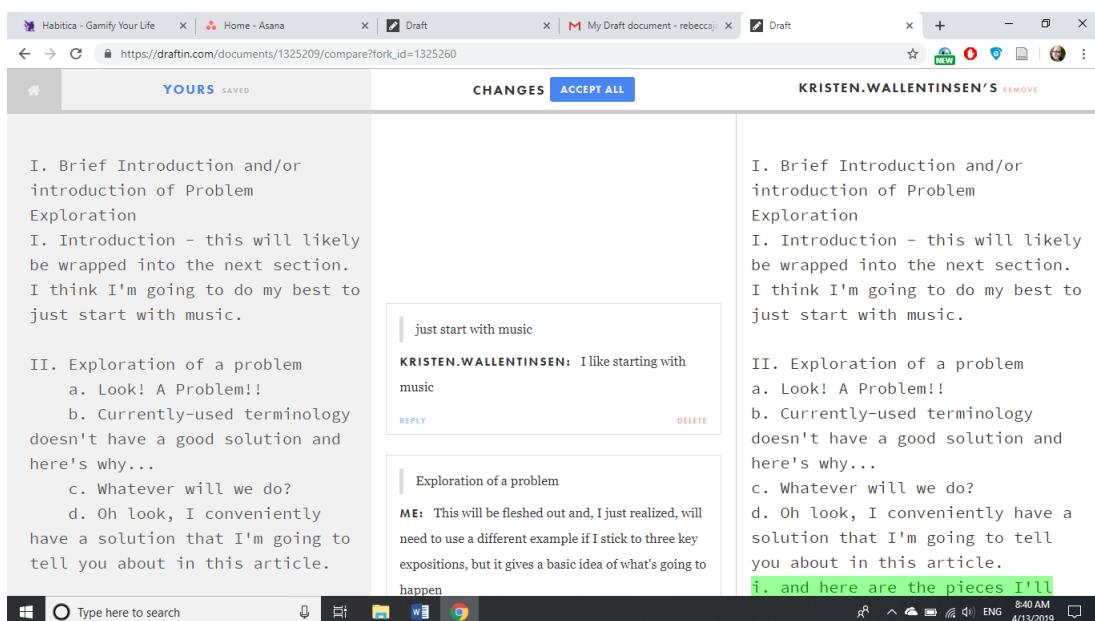
Points in favor:

- Distraction-free writing mode (Hemingway mode)
- Ability for side-by-side comparison of drafts
- Automatic saving of major drafts

Points against:

- Limited formatting options
- Online only

Screenshots:





## Google Docs

Google Docs is a writing software similar in design to Microsoft Word. It is available on Android, iOS, and web. It is simple and straightforward to use, allowing users to begin using the software to write fairly quickly. Its relative parity with Microsoft Word also means that its user interface is relatively easy to use for those who have used Word, and lets users easily switch between software without major formatting problems (an important thing to consider when sharing documents with mentors). Its main draw for use by many students is its price tag: free. However, it is not as robust as other writing software when it comes to customizable formatting options, and therefore would be more challenging to use for larger projects like articles, theses, dissertations, etc. The other main draw for Google Docs is its facility for collaboration. It is the easiest software of those we tested to use for real-time collaboration on a document, especially when collaborators are working remotely. This is an important feature that can allow mentors and mentees to work well, especially for those who need to meet remotely.

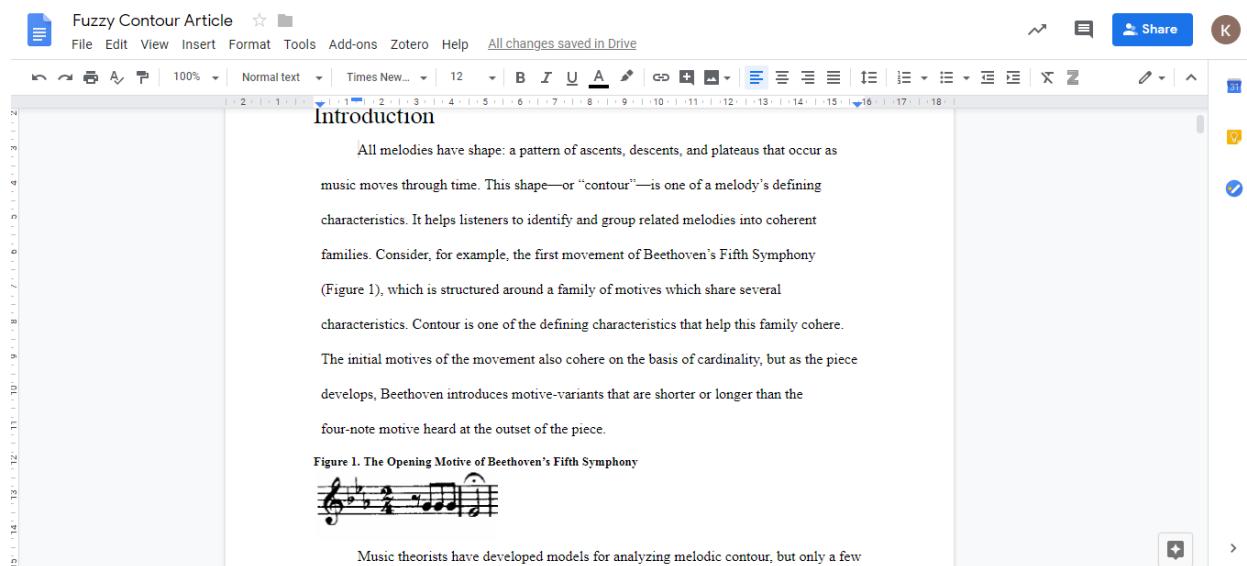
Points in favor:

- Collaborative features allow users to collaborate on documents in real time. It clearly shows where the other collaborator is with different colored cursors, allowing users to easily see changes.
- Relative parity with Microsoft Word means that documents will not have trouble when going between software.
- Integration with Google Drive means the user has access to their writing anywhere.

Points against:

- Google docs functions only online. This means that one must have internet connection in order to write (this can be bad for those who have spotty internet, for those who can't handle internet distraction, or for those on a writing retreat without internet)
- There are no in-house citation managers, and plug-ins for third party reference software (like Zotero or Mendeley) either crash or significantly slow down the software.

Screenshots:



## MS Word, Writing

Microsoft Word is available on Mac, PC, iOS, and Android. It is useful for outlining, drafting, and formatting documents of any size (though it can slow down when one writes a document over a certain size). Most students are familiar with its basic functions and formatting abilities. Microsoft Word also includes advanced formatting options used to create publishable copies of dissertations, articles, and so forth. These are not necessarily familiar to most users and can be frustrating to work with at first.

Microsoft Word does not allow real-time collaboration between users (unless one employs a third-party app like Google Docs). However, it is conducive to the collaborative writing or editing process in that it tracks changes, allows and tracks the comments of multiple users, and lets a user compare comments and suggested edits to original material.

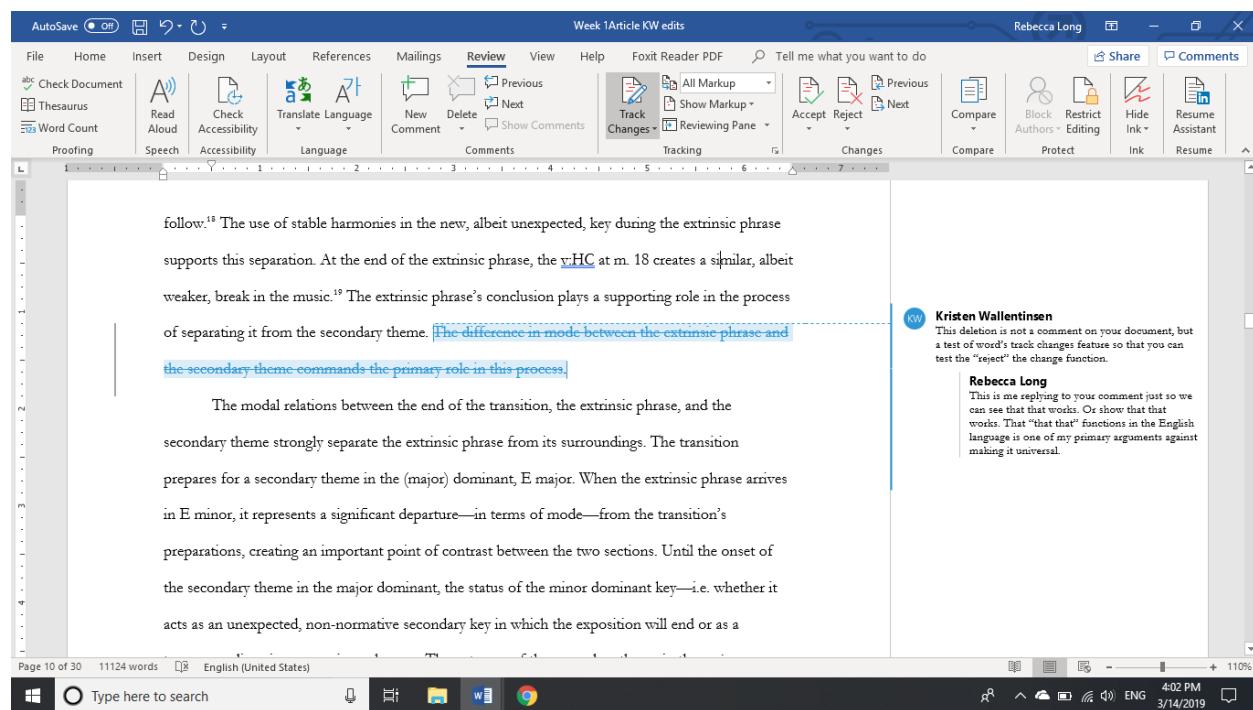
Points in favor:

- Advanced formatting capabilities
- Relative parity with Google Docs means that documents will not have trouble when going between software.
- Ability for multiple users to comment and track changes allows for collaborative writing

Points against:

- No ability for real-time collaboration
- Use of advanced formatting capabilities can be confusing and frustrating

Screenshots:



## Open Office

Open office is a software package for PC and Mac designed to be an open source alternative to Microsoft Office. It includes software for writing, presentations, spreadsheets, and others, but the one we tested is the writing software. In many ways it functions just like Microsoft Word, which makes the transition to using this software easier. Many of the buttons and the interfaces are the same as in MS word, although they look and function like an outdated version of Word (circa the old MS word 2000 edition). Like word, it does have a robust customizability that helps the user to create formatted documents. However, it does lack some of the more recent and robust features that current versions of MS word has, like Outlining, online sharing, etc. The software automatically saves documents in Open Office Document format (.odt), but users can choose to save their work as .doc files as well (newer file types like .docx are not supported). The software does not have apps for mobile, but a number of third-party sources offer work-arounds for this.

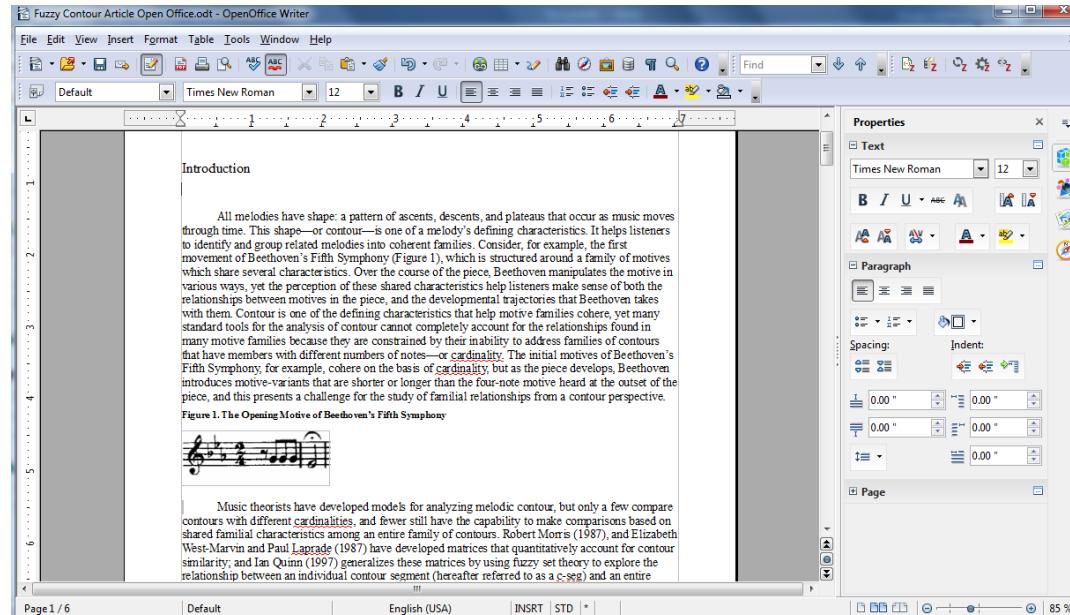
Points in favor:

- Price: this open source software is free for the user, which is a big save when other applications can cost up to \$70 per year.
- Users who have used MS Word previously will have an easier time using the software.
- Some citation plug-ins (Zotero and Mendeley) work with Open Office

Points against:

- The software looks outdated:
  - File types are outdated, creating issues with sharing files with others.
  - Lack of parity between current versions of Open Office and Microsoft Word
  - When transitioning documents between Open Office and Microsoft Word, formatting changes. This can cause big problems for mentor/mentee collaboration, and for final formatting of large writing projects. Furthermore, users cannot save to .pdf, which would preserve formatting.
- No collaborative features

Screenshots:



## Scrivener

Scrivener is available on Mac and PC. It is useful for planning, outlining, drafting, and organizing research. Scrivener allows users to create different storyboards to guide a project. That is, users can create a digital bulletin board of ideas, examples, or paper sections. Although the language and organization of these boards can be confusing at first, they can be useful for organizing large projects. Unlike MS Word and other apps, Scrivener contains only a few formatting options. The app recommends exporting one's text to MS Word to create a final copy. Furthermore, Scrivener is not directly compatible with any known resource management apps. Collaboration with Scrivener is next to impossible as Scrivener stores a user's document (and their storyboards) in a folder. Sharing a document requires users to send zipped folders to one another. Comments, notes, and tracking changes are unavailable.

Although not conducive to collaborative writing or to the final editing of a document, Scrivener has gained favor among some. Its storyboarding approach is useful for planning large projects and organizing research. Furthermore, it features a distraction-free writing mode that minimizes screen clutter and helps writers focus on putting "words on the page."

Points in favor:

- Distraction-free writing mode
- Storyboarding approach allows for easy organization of large projects

Points against:

- Limited-to-no ability for collaboration
- Limited formatting options

Screenshots:

