

What Changed in This PDF?

Align revisions, distinguish reflow and record decisions with evidence

01

02

03

How to use this guide

Reviewers comparing ordinary document revisions before approval.

An original setup-specification case separates a quantity edit, missing footnote, moved paragraph and harmless source reflow using reproducible source fixtures and a decision register.

- Control the old/new baseline and comparison direction.
- Separate movement, normalized text edits and presentation checks.
- Prioritize small consequential changes.
- Create an actionable four-finding review register.

Scope and limitations

- The checker compares the supplied structured sources; it does not claim live PDF-tool results.
- Browser PDF export and visual comparison require separate actual checks.
- This is not legal contract review, venue safety certification or a universal semantic-diff engine.

Published by KitForma. Edition 1.0. Sources checked 1 October 2026. People and businesses in worked examples are fictional. This is an independent publication, not endorsed by the platforms mentioned.

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Contents

How to use this guide	2
Contents	3
Compare a decision, not two filenames	4
Sources and tools	6

01

Compare a decision, not two filenames

The fictional North Hall team has two versions of a setup specification for a community demonstration. Version A requests twenty-four folding chairs. Version B requests forty-two, moves the safety paragraph earlier, removes a footnote about keeping an aisle clear, and changes line wrapping in an otherwise identical setup instruction. The coordinator needs to know what changed and whether the new version can be issued. Counting highlighted differences will not answer that question without interpreting their meaning.

Begin by naming the decision: approve, return for correction, or request clarification on the revised setup specification. This is an ordinary operations example, not legal contract review, engineering certification, or a safety assessment of a real venue. The quantities and instructions are fictional. A document comparison can reveal that a limit or warning changed; it cannot tell you that the new arrangement is physically safe. Keep the content owner's approval responsibility separate from the mechanical comparison report.

Make an old/new manifest with filenames, version labels, dates supplied by the author, and checksums when available. Confirm that the files belong to the same document family. A recent download time does not prove that a file is the newest authorized version. If the author sends two files both called final, ask which is the baseline rather than guessing from folder order. In this workbook the JSON and HTML fixtures identify A as the baseline and B as the candidate.

The exercise provides structured source blocks as well as printable HTML versions. Stable block identifiers let you study alignment independently

from pagination. A standard-library checker produces a bounded difference summary from those sources. You can export the HTML to PDF using a browser and then try a PDF comparison tool of your choice, but that is a separate reader experiment. The included source comparison is not disguised as evidence that any particular PDF service has detected every change in a live file.

Sources and tools

[S1] Adobe: compare two PDF versions

<https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/compare-documents.html>

Checked: 2026-10-01

[S2] W3C PDF3: meaningful reading and tab order

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Techniques/pdf/PDF3>

Checked: 2026-10-01

Inside the complete guide

Establish the baseline before looking for differences

Align sections when pages move

Separate wording changes from harmless reflow

Review numbers, units and small qualifiers

Check footnotes and visual relationships

Turn differences into a decision register

Review a corrected candidate without losing history

Package the result for someone who did not review it

Capstone and answer key