

## Making Marking Manageable and Other Tips Using the Split-Screen Function

by AUSTIN PACK

The COVID pandemic has resulted in language learning around the world shifting from physical classrooms to online learning modalities. Teachers and students have had to make adjustments in teaching and learning as a result. One area greatly affected is the submission and marking of assignments in the form of electronic documents.

Teachers can easily become flustered while navigating Word documents, PDFs, and multiple browser tabs as they jump between students' assignments, rubrics, and online

learning management systems where marks are entered. This article provides language teachers with a straightforward strategy to simplify and streamline the process of marking assignments that have been submitted electronically. Examples of how this strategy can be applied to other aspects of teaching are also given.

When marking electronic documents, teachers often need to look at three documents or windows simultaneously: the

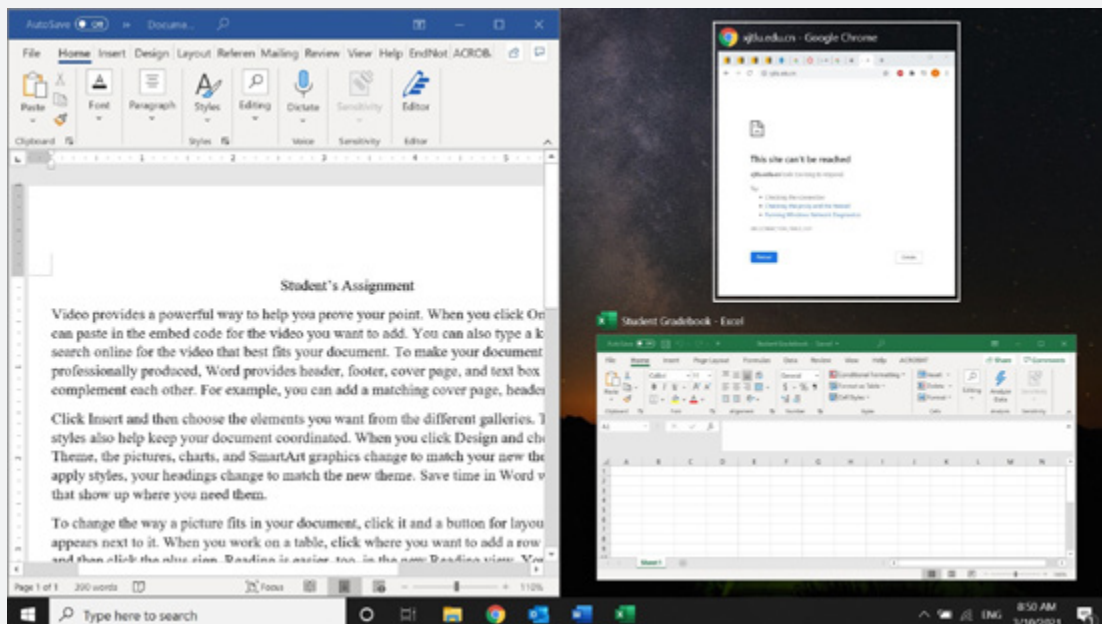


Figure 1. The result of pressing the “Windows logo” key and the “left arrow” key (see Step 3 under For Windows 10)

---

## This article provides language teachers with a straightforward strategy to simplify and streamline the process of marking assignments that have been submitted electronically.

---

student's assignment, the rubric used to assess the assignment, and the gradebook in which scores and feedback are given. To help with navigating these documents, teachers are advised to print the rubric and make use of "hotkeys" that result in maximizing the windows or documents on the left and right sides of the screen. This allows for two documents or windows to be displayed side by side on the screen simultaneously.

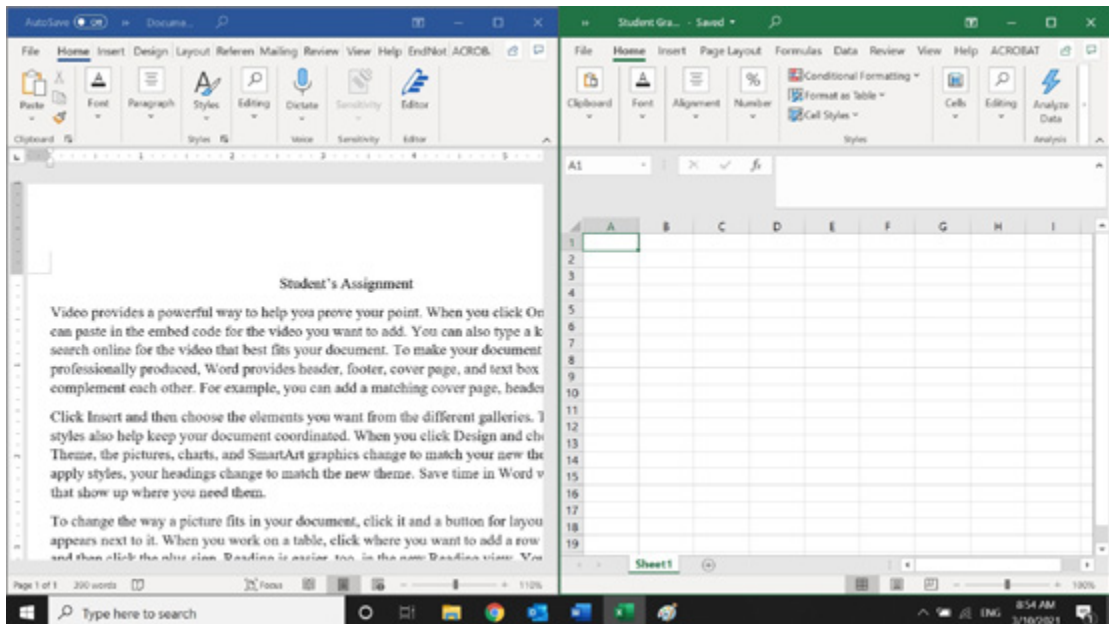
To accomplish this, follow the simple steps below. Separate instructions are given for users of Windows 10 and for users of macOS Catalina and later.

### For Windows 10

1. Print the rubric and set it nearby. Printing only the rubric saves time and paper while also preventing clutter.
2. Open the student's assignment and gradebook (usually a webpage or

document where you can enter marks and feedback).

3. Having the student's assignment as the current open window, press the "Windows logo" key and the "left arrow" key at the same time. This combination will result in the student's assignment being maximized on the left half of the screen, as shown in Figure 1.
4. You can now select from the remaining current open windows and documents on the right side of the screen. Click on the gradebook where you will enter marks and feedback. Clicking this will automatically maximize the gradebook to the right half of the screen, as shown in Figure 2.
5. To adjust the size of the text in the student's assignment so that the text fits within the window on the left half of the



**Figure 2.** The result of choosing a window or document to be maximized on the right half of the screen (see Step 4 under For Windows 10)

---

## In addition to helping to make marking manageable, the split-screen function can be used for other purposes in English language teaching.

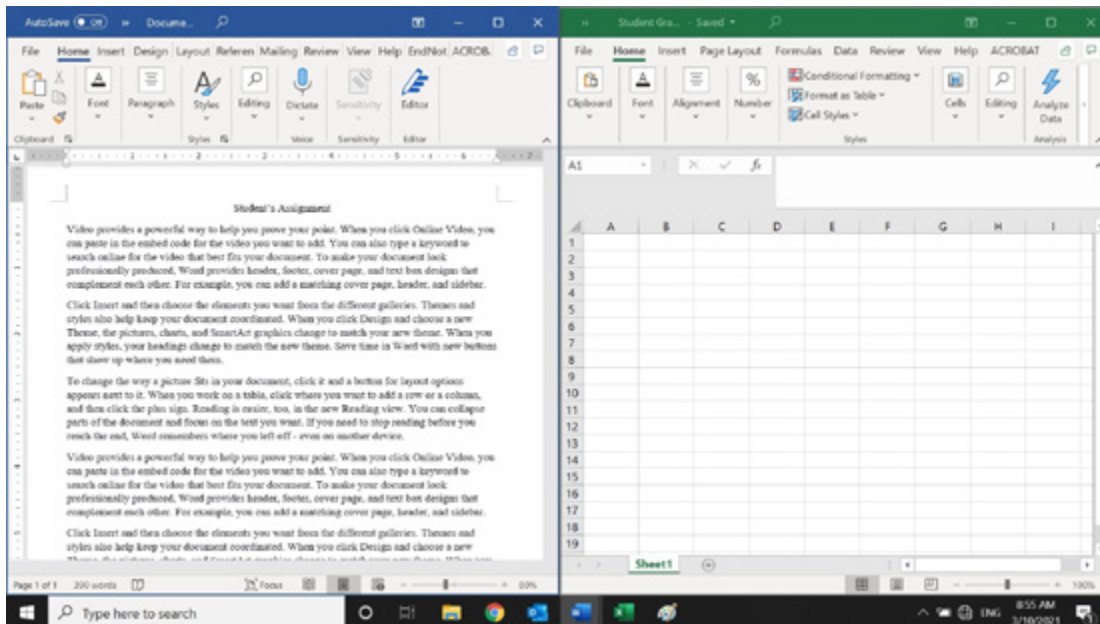
---

screen, with the student's assignment selected, hold the "ctrl" key while simultaneously scrolling down on the mouse wheel. This combination of holding the "ctrl" key while scrolling down will result in the view zooming outwards, thereby allowing more of the text to appear in the viewable window of the student's assignment. Compare Figures 2 and 3 to see the difference in text size.

### For macOS

1. Print the rubric and set it nearby.
2. Open the student's assignment and gradebook (usually a webpage or document where you can enter marks and feedback).
3. With the student's assignment selected as the current window, click and hold the green "full-screen" button in the upper-left corner of the window.

4. Select "Tile Window to Left of Screen" from the menu. This results in the student's assignment filling the left-hand side of the screen, as shown in Figure 4.
5. On the right-hand side of the screen, click the window of the webpage or document where you will enter marks and feedback. Doing this will automatically maximize the selected webpage or document to the right half of the screen, as shown in Figure 5.
6. To adjust the size of the text in the student's assignment so that the text fits within the window on the left half of the screen, with the student's assignment selected, hold the "Option" key while simultaneously pressing the "Command" and "minus sign" (-) keys. This combination of keys will result in the view zooming outwards, allowing for more of the text to appear in the



**Figure 3. The text size in the student's document has been adjusted for easier reading (see Step 5 under For Windows 10).**

---

## You can also use the split screen while giving general feedback to a classroom of students.

---

viewable window of the student's assignment. Compare Figures 5 and 6 to see the difference in text size.

By following the above steps, you should be able to simultaneously look at the rubric, student's assignment, and gradebook, making it easier to navigate between the three documents while marking.

### OTHER USES OF THE SPLIT-SCREEN FUNCTION

In addition to helping to make marking manageable, the split-screen function can be used for other purposes in English language teaching, particularly if a projector is available. For example, perhaps you would like students to reflect on certain questions as they watch a video. Normally, you might explain the questions before showing the video; however, as students watch the video, they may forget the questions they were supposed to reflect on. An alternative is to use the split-screen function to display the questions in a window

on the left, with the video playing on the right. This setup would prevent students from forgetting the questions they were asked to reflect on as they process the content of the video.

You can also use the split screen while giving general feedback to a classroom of students. Consider the following situation: You have just finished marking a writing assignment and notice that many of the students are making similar mistakes in how they organize their paragraphs. You can use the split-screen function to display a writing sample (with the student's name removed) on the left, with the rubric (or the relevant part of it) set on the right. You can then ask students to evaluate the sample on the left, using the information provided in the rubric on the right. After students share their thoughts, in pairs or as a class, you can provide feedback of your own in order to share insights with the students as to how the writing sample could be improved.

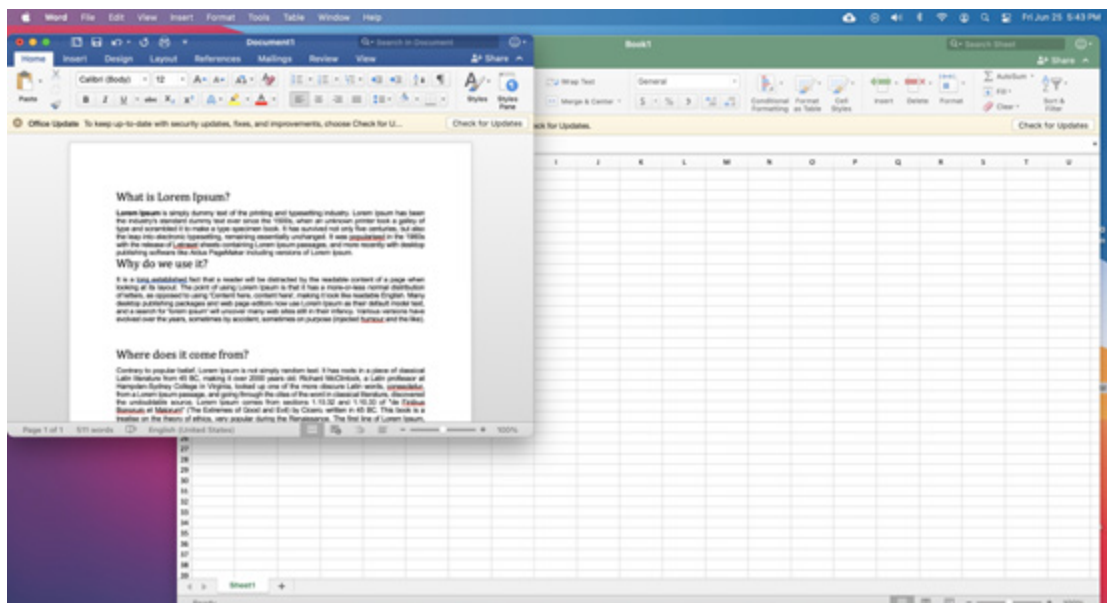
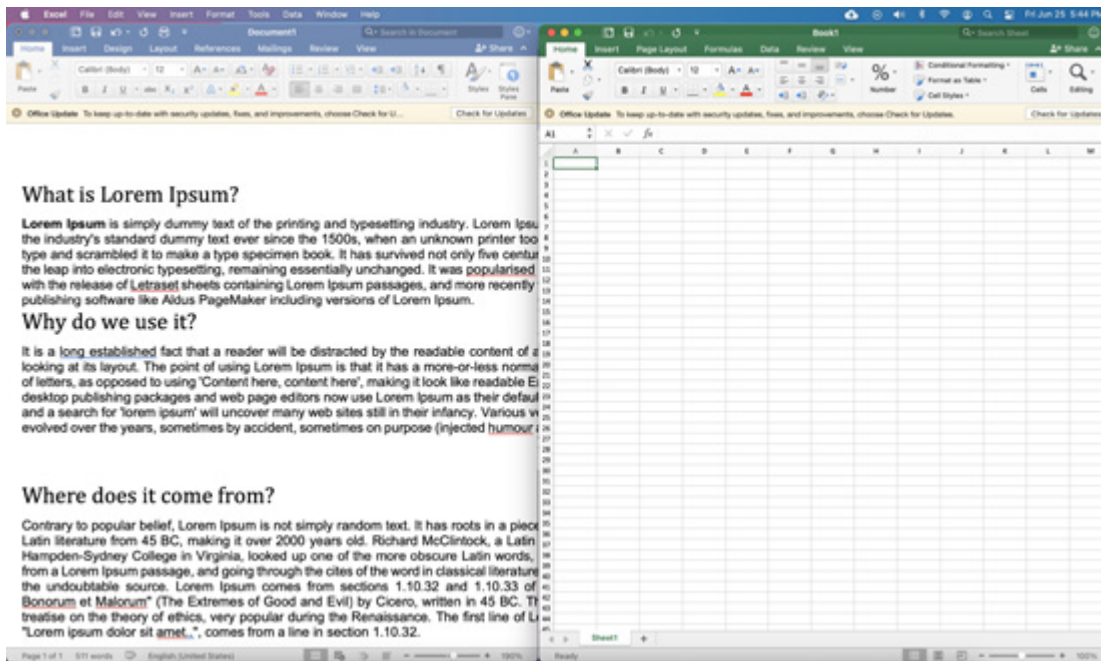
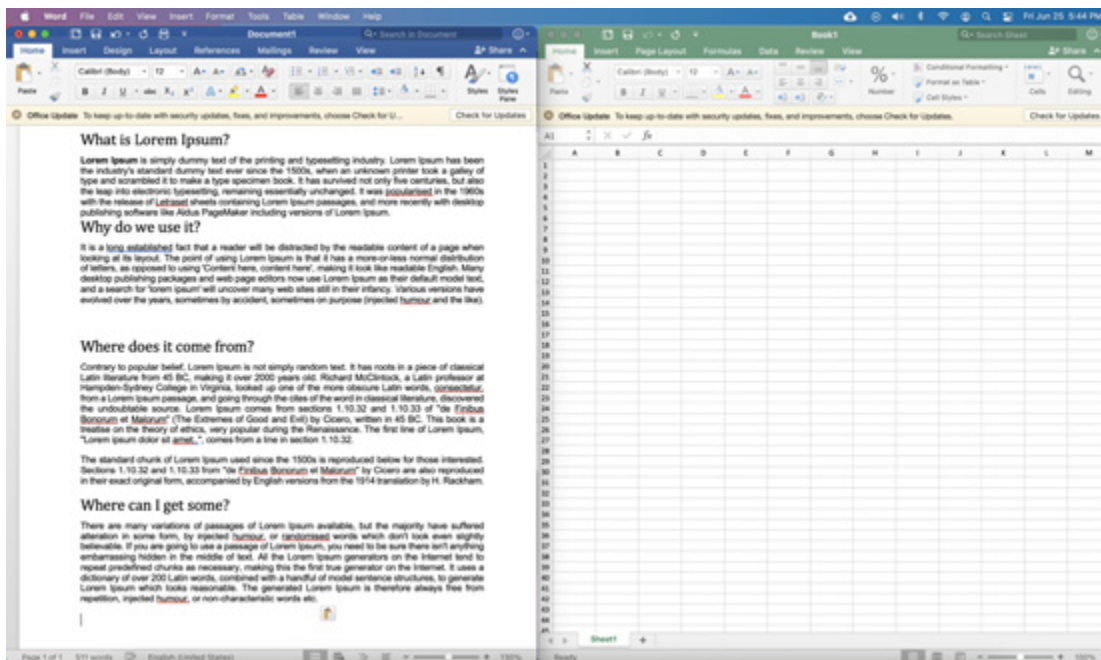


Figure 4. The result of selecting “Tile Window to Left of Screen” (see Step 4 under For macOS)



**Figure 5.** The result of choosing a window or document to be maximized on the right half of the screen (see Step 5 under For macOS)



**Figure 6.** The text size in the student's document has been adjusted for easier reading (see Step 6 under For macOS).

There are many ways to use the split-screen function in addition to the suggestions outlined in this article. How would you use the split screen for your own benefit? How could you utilize this function for the benefit of your students? Try it out and share with your colleagues if you find it useful!

**Austin Pack** is an Assistant Professor of English Language Teaching and Learning at Brigham Young University–Hawaii. His research interests include the psychology of language learning and second language motivation.

Screenshots by Austin Pack