

Krista's tips on how to write to an allotted word length

- Know how much space your handwriting takes up on a page so you can work out how many pages to write.
- If you're writing on computer, how many words fit a page?
- Using size 12 font it's about 500 — use word count to double-check!
- Consider your audience - choose form, tone and vocabulary to suit.
- List the main points you want to make.
- Sort them into order.
- Eliminate peripheral points.
- Decide how much space you should give to each point.
- Balance the spaces you allot for your introduction, development and your resolution — and don't run out of space for your conclusion.
- If you have 600 words, your intro should be roughly 150 words, the body of your piece 300 words and the conclusion 150 words: balance!
- Know where you're going.
- Do a plan/plot outline and stick to it don't get side-tracked.
- Have one idea per paragraph,
- Don't waffle on to fill the space - it'll probably be rubbish.
- Do a rough copy and leave it for a while, preferably overnight.
- Be objective when you self edit - pretend someone else wrote it.
- Be critical, use a red pen - It's an amazingly satisfying process.
- Read and re-read to check that you're writing makes sense and communicates what you intended to say.
- Read it out loud to more easily pick up mistakes or contradictions.
- Delete words, phrases and sentences, even whole paragraphs, that don't advance your story or argument
- Good self-editing should be honest and ruthless — then your piece will be tight and impressive.