

Lower your word count

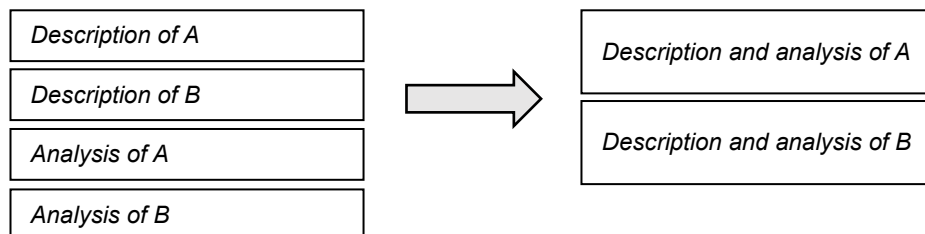
To manage your word count, always begin with the big picture because that is usually the best way to make a significant difference. Look for whole paragraphs and sentences to remove before you start cutting out individual words. This handout describes strategies you can try, but it is up to you to decide which ones are appropriate for your work.

See the big picture

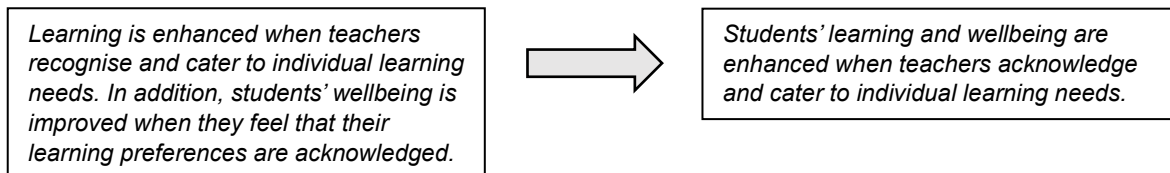
- Cut out anything that is not directly relevant to the assignment instructions. Be prepared to delete entire paragraphs.
- If all your points are relevant, choose your best ones and delete others. Your assignment will still be good without them.
- Make your sections roughly in proportion to the weightings on the marking rubric, if these are given.
- For your next assignment, decide how many words to devote to each point or section on your plan before you start drafting.

Control repetition

- If you make the same point elsewhere, delete it. Note, however, that repetition can aid emphasis and clarity, and key points in introductions and conclusions need repeating.
- If you have two paragraphs making similar points, combine them into one.
- Remove summary sentences from the ends of paragraphs if they don't clarify anything.
- Integrate parts of your discussion that you have separated out.



- Group sentences on the same topic together. This saves you naming the topic each time.
- Combine sentences that refer to the same idea more than once.



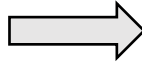
Get to the point

- Reduce context and description to just what is needed to support your points. For example:
 - In case studies, don't give details of the case that are not relevant to your analysis.
 - In reflections, remove details of your situation that you don't reflect on.
 - When discussing research, if your point is to share a finding, omit details like method.
- Begin a paragraph with the point you want to make. Ensure the rest of the sentences relate to that point.
- For vague and wordy sentences or paragraphs, think again about what exactly it is you want to say. Put your ideas into short, simple sentences.

Use fewer words

- Use simple subjects, especially where people (or other agents) are implied.

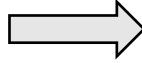
The implementation of scaffolded lesson plans leads to improvements in learning.



When teachers scaffold their lesson plans, students learn more.

- Start a sentence with the subject followed closely by its verb.
 - Look out for sentences starting *By doing X, this ...*.

By holding classes online, this can reduce a student's carbon footprint.



Holding classes online can reduce a student's carbon footprint.

- Look out for sentences starting *There is/are ...* or *It is...*.

There are some scholars who disagree with this view.



Some scholars disagree with this view.

- Try to use verbs to convey meaning, replacing phrases that have the meaning in a noun or adjective.

represents
The policy ~~is representative of~~ a global trend.

affects
Coffee ~~has an effect on~~ sleep.

supports
This data ~~provides support for~~ the claim.

altered
I ~~made alterations to~~ the design.

- Cut out words that do not add anything.
 - Filler words and phrases:

*~~It is my opinion that~~ New Zealand should sign up to the charter.
~~In this case, I think~~ the manager failed to understand the team's concerns.
~~It is interesting to note that~~ the use of GenAI is allowed in many university courses.
Because child poverty is ~~essentially~~ so widespread, it is ~~obviously~~ a critical issue.
Recovery should be 4–6 weeks as ~~it has been shown that~~ this is optimal for tissue repair (Wu et al., 2023).
~~As is widely known,~~ godwits perform one of the furthest seasonal migrations in the world.*

- Words whose meaning is covered by others in the sentence:

*~~In terms of results,~~ the study found 58% of respondents agreed.
Academic standards must be upheld ~~within the university context~~.
Franks et al. (2021) used a similar method ~~in their study~~.*

- Additional hedging words (e.g., *might*, *may*, *could*, *possible*, *potential*, *some*, *sometimes*):

*~~It could be that~~ these changes may have been motivated by neoliberal ideologies.
This reveals ~~the possibility~~ that some customers are ~~potentially~~ unaware of the loyalty scheme.
In general, patients are ~~mostly~~ seen within one week.*