

## Word limit-more,less

Selling Your Work · By Simon Townsend · 1 min read

---

A word limit means just that: a limit. When you are instructed by your editor (or by your journalism journey or by an experienced editor) to not change a word limit - either below it or above it - you must do that, without question. Any professional journalist can stick to a word limit. Any professional journalist **MUST** be able to cut down his or her own words, or, use more words. Not padding, but genuinely expand the article if that is what is required. It is not nice to fling your article at someone else, like an experienced editor or your editor, and say: "I love my words so much, I can't possibly cut them, so you do it." Or: "That's all I could manage. If you want more words, **YOU** write them." When you don't stick to a word limit, you are saying to your editor: "Hey, in my case you're wrong. For my brilliant and clever writing, I need **MORE** words." (Or **LESS** words.) Your editor rolls his eyes, doesn't bother to read your material and into the wastepaper bin it goes. It's a very simple instruction in the world of journalism. Stick to your word limit. For instance, 300 words doesn't mean 500, or 400, or 200 or even 301 or 299 . . .

300 means what it says. Please **DO IT** and at all times obey instructions and act professionally.

---

Reprinted from The Wonderful World of Journalism. Written in the spirit of Simon Townsend's journalism craft advice. Visit [simontownsendjournalist.com](http://simontownsendjournalist.com) for the full archive.