How2 write for the web

Writing for the web is very different from writing anything else. People who visit websites don't want to read lots of text. Research has shown website visitors scan rather than read text. Some people only stay on a webpage for 50 milliseconds (which isn't very long!). So you need to write very short text for your website.

Here are a few rules for writing for the web...

- Write half as much as you would usually write
- If you really have lots to say, use hyperlinks. These are links from the webpage to a longer document where you can say more. The good thing about this is that your website visitor can decide whether they want to read it or not
- To use a hyperlink, create a separate webpage where you have the information you'd like people to read. Select a word in your main page text to insert the hyperlink (this might be 'click here to read more'). Highlight the word and right click to insert the hyperlink.
- Use bullet points as much as you can (just as I have here!)
- Use lots of headings, but make them meaningful so the text you put under the headings really does relate to the heading
- Use plain language and short sentences
- Don't make jokes or use words that only your age group understands (not everyone knows that wicked means good!)
- Check your spelling, punctuation and grammar carefully

A few other things to remember...

You are the author of your own website. This means you have to take responsibility for it. So...

- Don't 'borrow' material from other people's websites – this might be breach of copyright (that is, taking something that isn't yours, in this case, written material)

- Ask someone to check your content before you publish it, to make sure you haven't written anything you shouldn't have