

Tris's Word Tracking Spreadsheet

This is the ongoing up-to-date documentation for my word tracking spreadsheet, posted in conjunction with the new sheet each year. These instructions are current as of the [2024 version](#), and include instructions for:

- How to enter your information on the main Wordcount tab
- How to set and review goals on the Monthly Totals tab
- How to interpret the Daily, Weekly, and Monthly graphs
- Why there is a Year End AO3 Stats page
- Checking progress using the Annual Comparison and Pledges tabs

For those who have been waiting for this spreadsheet, here it is! For those who are new to it, please take a look, use if you'd like, and share if you want to. All I ask is that if you make changes and spread the changed sheet around, please credit me as the original inspiration and link back to the original as well.

This spreadsheet was developed because I found that it helped me keep myself moving forward from year to year, and I've been using it since 2012. I've been sharing it after folks asked what I was using to track my words, and it has evolved over the years into the version below. The instructions include screenshots from the 2021 spreadsheet and have finally been updated because a few things have changed. So. I guess I should update the instructions!

This spreadsheet was designed to allow you to set monthly goals for your writing, and easily track your words on different projects each day. It totals up your words for the day, your words for the month, and your words for the year. As you carry it along year to year, you can even track trends in your writing habits (for example, I've learned that I really suck at writing in May/June/July).

I'm going to go through this tab by tab to show you what's what, and how to set yourself up and work daily.

MONTHLY TOTALS

We are actually going to begin with the second tab: Monthly Totals. This is where your totals are tracked, and where you set your goals. You can either set all your goals ahead of time, or month by month.

F24							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1		Actual	Running Total	Pledge	Avg/Day		
2	January	1,380	1,380	15,000	45	GOAL:	200,000
3	February	-	1,380	15,000	-	AVG PER DAY NEEDED:	548
4	March	-	1,380	15,000	-		
5	April	-	1,380	15,000	-	WORDS TO GOAL:	198,620
6	May	-	1,380	15,000	-	AVG PER DAY TO GOAL:	540
7	June	-	1,380	15,000	-		
8	July	-	1,380	15,000	-	TOTAL PLEDGE:	215,000
9	August	-	1,380	15,000	-		
10	September	-	1,380	15,000	-	LAST DAY IN YEAR:	12/31/2021
11	October	-	1,380	15,000	-		
12	November	-	1,380	50,000	-		
13	December	-	1,380	15,000	-		
14							
15	Totals	1,380		215,000			
16							

On this tab, you can fill in your pledges per month, and your goal for the year in the cells marked in grey. The monthly pledges (see column D) will transfer to other tabs as needed, and will be used to calculate a daily expected word count for each month. If you set an annual goal (you don't have to!), you'll be able to see how close you are to making that goal, and whether your pledges add up to the annual goal.

You can see your words to goal, and average needed per day to get to the goal.

You can see my usual pledges here. I've lowered my goals recently because I've found that around 500 words expected per day actually encourages me to make more, and doesn't make me feel bad if I make fewer.

The Actual column (B) is calculated automatically for you based on what you fill in on the Wordcount sheet, so let the spreadsheet do the work for you!

WORDCOUNT

The next tab we need to take a look at is the first one. This is where you'll be doing your work, on the tab titled Wordcount.

For example, if I were ready to start Jan 3rd, I select from G6 through M6 (one after my last project) and copy those cells down (I do it by using the little square in the bottom right to drag it down, but you do what's best for you).

When you finish working on a project, enter its current total word count.

Now, let's take a closer look at what's above.

- I started two projects on Jan 1st: "Sample 1" and "Sample 2"
- "Sample 1" started with 0 words
- "Sample 2" came in from last year with 157 words already written
- On January 1st, I recorded 500 words for "Sample 1" and 157 (no new words) for "Sample 2", and the sheet calculated that I wrote 500 words that day
- On January 2nd I didn't add anything on "Sample 1", but "Sample 2" increased to 200 TOTAL words (NOT new words), so I added 43 words that day.

NEW COLUMNS: There are two new columns this year for Daily Hours and Total Hours. The total column is calculated, but you can fill in the daily hours you worked (I use quarter hour increments) in order to see how much time you've spent on writing (and writing-related tasks!) this year. The total column will show in the Daily Graph tab, but if you don't want to use them, just hide them!

	A	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	Date	Target	Actual	Daily	Actual	Total		Daily	Sample 1	Sample 2	Sample 3
2	Fest/Comm	Total	Total	Target	Words/Day	Hours		Hours	AO3	DPP	
3	Due Date								1/31/2022	n/a	
4	Start #Words				543				0	157	0
5	1/1/2023	484	500	484	500	0.50		0.50	500	157	0
6	1/2/2023	968	543	484	43	0.75		0.25	500	200	0
7	1/3/2023	1,452	543	484	-	2.00		1.25	500	200	0
8	1/4/2023	1,935	543	484							
9	1/5/2023	2,419	543	484							

On January 3rd, I added "Sample 3" with 0 words to start, and I made sure that every row in my new column showed those 0 words.

The sheet color codes for days where you are below target or above target in the Actual Words/Day column. It'll be white on zero days. You can see at a glance your trends for writing.

It also marks projects that have been added to as green on that day in their column, which is nice if you do a weekly or monthly round up. Again, you can see at a glance which projects you've worked on, versus the ones still waiting.

When you finish a fic, simply hide the column (do not delete it). That's why copying down the entire row from G to after the last one with data is important, so you copy the hidden columns too.

Some information about the other columns.

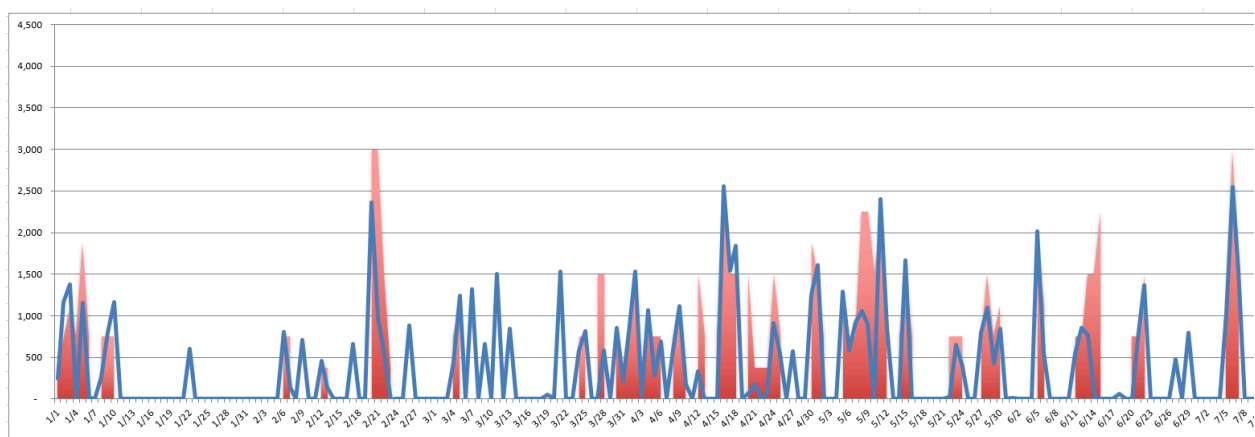
- *Target Total* is where you hoped to be that year by that date.

If you're not there, don't worry!! Zero days are OKAY and give yourself a chance to catch up another time. If you need to adjust your pledges, go do that on the Monthly Totals tab and everything will update.

- The *Daily Target* is the total you are hoping to reach to stay on target toward the Monthly Pledge for that month—it'll be different each month depending on what you pledge.

Now let's move on to some of the fun tracking pieces. Next up are Daily Graph, Monthly Graph, and Weekly Graph, which are exactly what they sound like. I'll show examples from my modified partial 2022 spreadsheet (note, the daily graph will look very up and down—that's OKAY! Again, let yourself have zero days...).

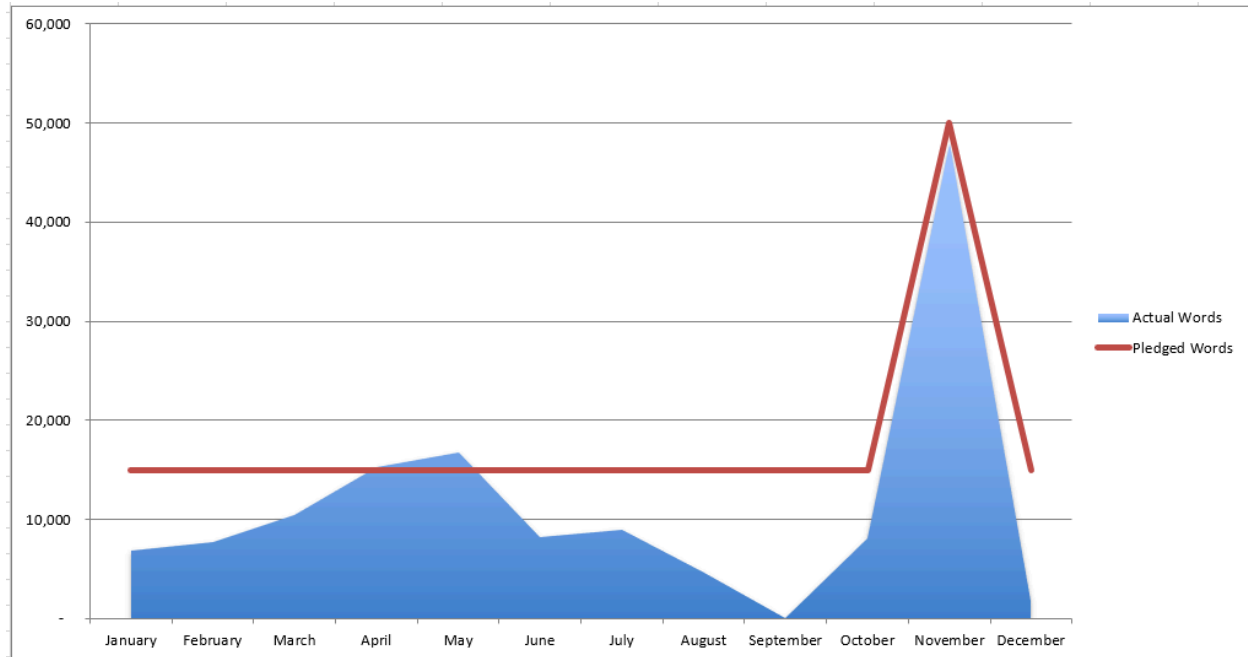
DAILY GRAPH



In the new Daily Graph, the area graph is the hours spent (the right axis shows hours, but isn't visible in this screenshot). The line is the words made. Some days may have lots of time but not a lot of words. Some days may be zero. It's all okay!

I started tracking time because this year I had a lot of non-word tasks that were very important to set me up to be able to publish, and I wanted to see that I was still spending time on writing, even if I wasn't making actual words at the moment.

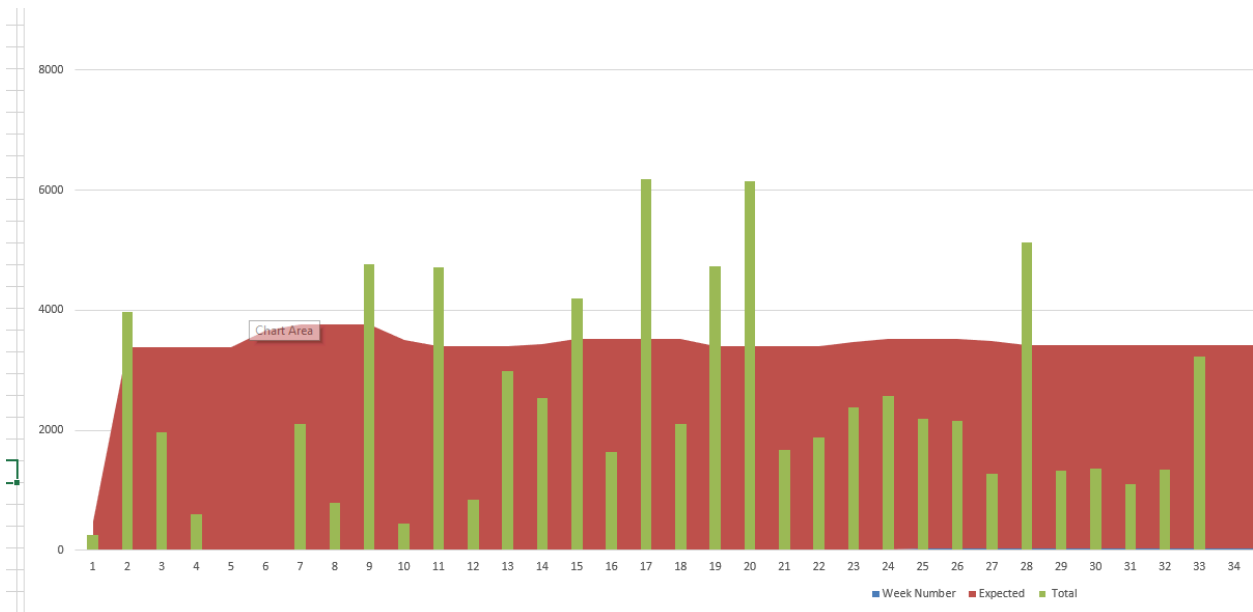
MONTHLY GRAPH



In the monthly graph, the line is the pledge, and the area is the actual words made, making it a little easier to see the comparison.

WEEKLY GRAPH

The newest graph tab is the Weekly Graph, which is expected weekly output vs actual weekly output. Because zero days are okay, and sometimes everything averages out over the week.



YEAR END AO3 STATS

There is a weird little blank tab for tracking AO3 stats, if you want to do so like I do. Feel free to modify as you need, based on your own personal fandoms. I just carry data through from year to year so I can see how things change.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
2	Total Fics									
3	Teen Wolf									
4	Harry Potter									
5	Check Please									
6	Welcome to PHU									
7	Glee									
8	Supernatural									
9	Voltron									
10	Series									
11	Author Sub									
12	Rel. Works									
13	Gifts									
14	Wordcount									
15	Kudos									
16	Hits									
17	Comment Threads									
18	Bookmarks									
19	Subscriptions									

ANNUAL COMPARISON

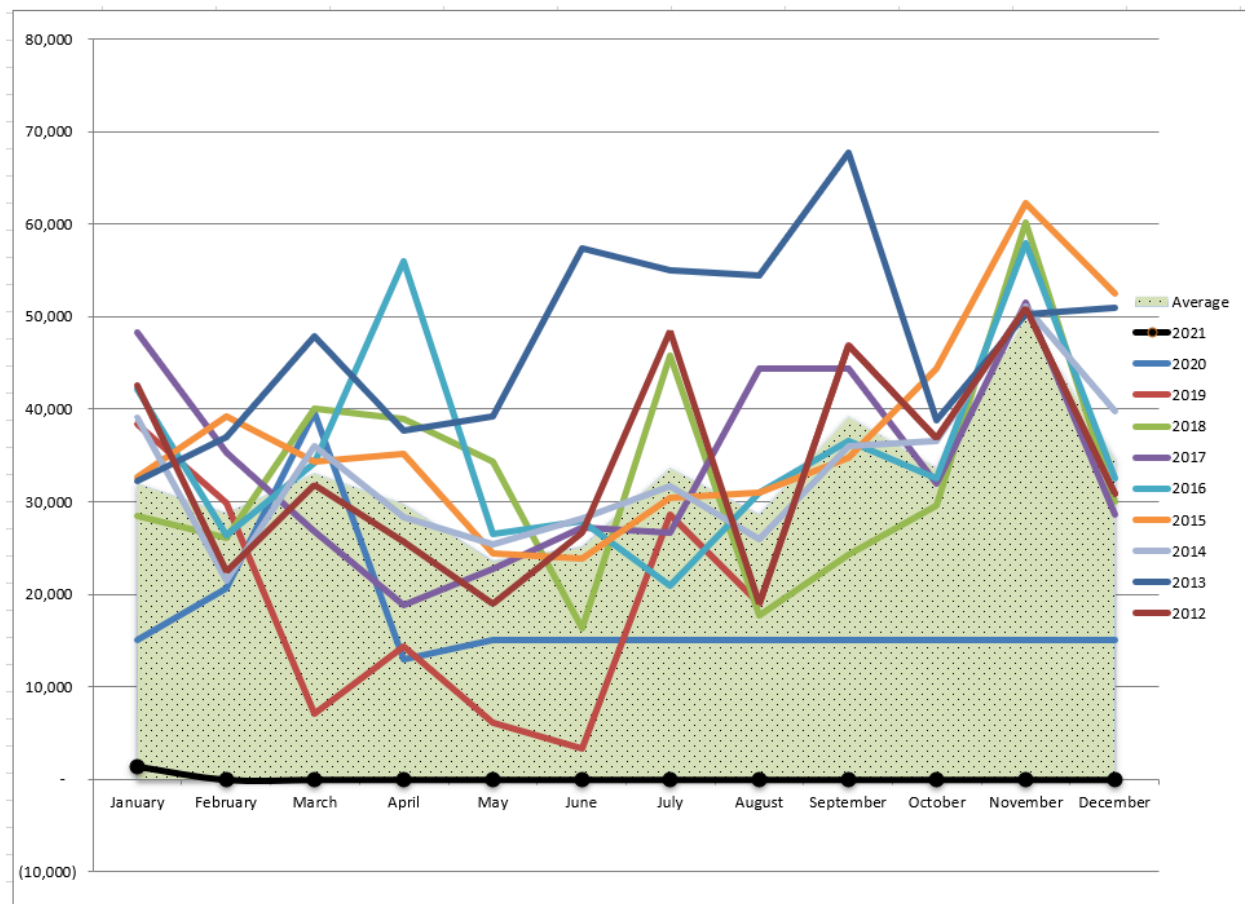
The last two tabs are my favorite! The Annual Comparison tab becomes useful after you've been using the spreadsheet more than a year, because by keeping track of totals year to year, you can start to see what your writing tendencies are. This tab changed in 2022.

In the main data, I have added a Range (difference between the current month and the average) and a Median. In both cases, it won't calculate (just like the average) until you're actually in that month. Prior calculations are against the prior year's data.

Just copy in your data from prior spreadsheets, then let the new column for this year calculate on its own. No work needed once you've put in the old data!

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1		2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	Average
2	January	1,380	15,020	38,431	28,511	48,329	42,078	32,609	39,072	32,190	42,496	32,012
3	February	-	20,678	29,922	26,118	35,325	26,385	39,242	21,526	37,023	22,393	28,735
4	March	-	39,684	7,086	40,056	26,811	34,176	34,271	36,008	47,906	31,879	33,097
5	April	-	12,909	14,301	38,911	18,861	56,006	35,162	28,388	37,623	25,635	29,755
6	May	-	15,020	6,088	34,274	22,673	26,453	24,369	25,384	39,225	18,918	23,600
7	June	-	15,020	3,331	16,366	27,194	27,860	23,789	28,236	57,323	26,602	25,080
8	July	-	15,020	28,585	45,841	26,677	20,954	30,450	31,616	55,028	48,449	33,624
9	August	-	15,020	18,970	17,691	44,419	30,989	31,008	25,998	54,433	18,970	28,611
10	September	-	15,020	46,849	24,343	44,431	36,529	34,805	35,959	67,640	46,849	39,158
11	October	-	15,020	36,775	29,612	31,922	32,526	44,313	36,577	38,785	36,775	33,589
12	November	-	15,020	50,970	60,208	51,538	57,960	62,194	51,121	50,277	50,970	50,029
13	December	-	15,020	30,897	30,049	28,588	32,553	52,445	39,738	50,908	30,897	34,566
14												
15		1,380	208,451	312,205	391,980	406,768	424,469	444,657	399,623	568,361	400,833	391,857
16												
17											Range	Median
18	INSTRUCTIONS:									January	(30,632)	35,520
19	The 2021 data will autopopulate. Copy in the other columns from prior sheets.									February	N/A	26,385
20	The average, range, and median will only include 2021 when the month for 2021 is non-zero.									March	N/A	34,271
21	The area chart is the average.									April	N/A	28,388
22	The black line with dots is 2021, to stand out against the rest.									May	N/A	24,369
23	All other years are lines.									June	N/A	26,602
24										July	N/A	30,450
25										August	N/A	25,998
26										September	N/A	36,529
27										October	N/A	36,577
28										November	N/A	51,121
29										December	N/A	30,897

Sample data included solely to be able to make it make sense. Just delete it from the sheet and put in your own instead!

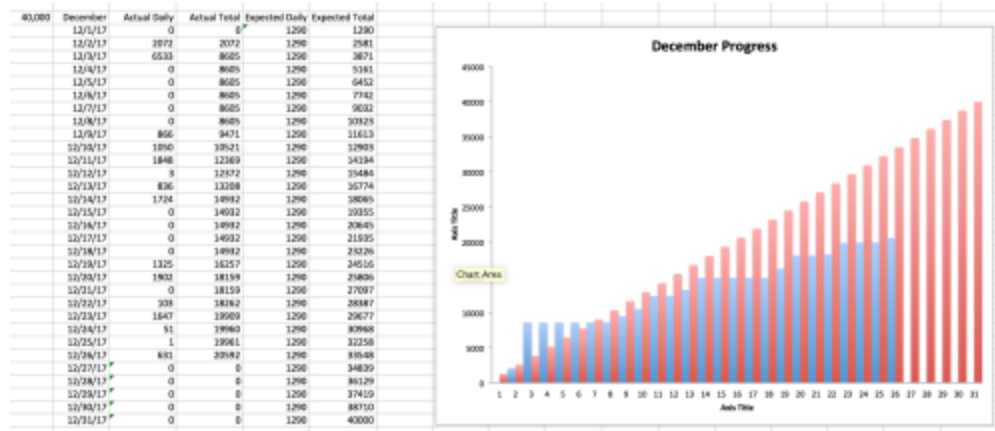


The area chart is your average across all your data. The colored lines are all the years. The current year is in black, with markers, to make it really stand out. So you can see both how you are doing against your prior years and your typical average per month.

PLEDGES

And the last tab helps you track your progress toward your pledges. This tab is why I created the spreadsheet in the first place. I did NaNo back in 2011 and realized that being able to see my progress helped keep me writing. I like visuals! It lets me see at a glance how I'm progressing toward my goal each month.

You don't need to fill in a thing on this sheet! It pulls in the pledge from where you set it on the Monthly Totals tab, and calculates your wordcount based on that sheet, and does everything for you. Just sit back and enjoy the charts. Red columns are the expected totals, and blue will be your actual progress. You can see whether you're ahead or behind (and DON'T WORRY if you're behind, it is OKAY).



Yes, that's my actual horrible progress December 2018. It was a rough month.

Anyway, that's it! Hope you like it, and if you've used it before, thank you for coming back. Feel free to ask if you have any questions!