



The Plain Talk Team

How to Calculate the Readability of Your Document

Test option #1:

- Step 1:** Count the number of words in the document
- Step 2:** Count the number of syllables
- Step 3:** Count the number of sentences
- Step 4:** Average number of syllables per word

$$\text{Total \# syllables} \div \text{Total \# words}$$

- Step 5:** Average number of words per sentence

$$\text{Total \# words} \div \text{Total \# sentences}$$

- Step 6:** Find readability score

$$1.015 * \text{Average sentence length} = \underline{\quad Y \quad}$$

$$84.6 * \text{Average word length} = \underline{\quad Z \quad}$$

$$Y + Z = A$$

$$206.835 - A = \text{Readability level}$$

This is on a scale of 1 – 100 with 100 being very easy. A score of **65 is Plain English**

Test option #2:

FOG Index

- Step 1:** Select a passage (one paragraph)
- Step 2:** Total number of words _____
- Step 3:** Total number of sentences _____
- Step 4:** Average sentence length (words/sentences) _____
- Step 5:** Total polysyllable words _____
- Step 6:** Percentage of long words (step 5 divided by Step 2) _____
- Step 7:** Step 4 + Step 6 _____
- Step 8:** Multiply by 0.4
X _____ 0.4

Readability or Grade Level = _____