

Here are two ways of checking the readability of your copy:

Fog Index¹

- Select a sample of at least 100 words.
- Divide the number of words by the number of complete sentences in your sample to find out the average number of words per sentence.
- Count the number of words with three or more syllables - don't include proper nouns, verbs with suffixes (e.g. engages or engaging) or portmanteau words which combine shorter words (e.g. downtrodden).
- Add the average number of words per sentence to number of difficult words and multiply by two.
- Now divide the result by five and add five.
- This gives you the reading age needed to understand your copy

Microsoft Word...

- Click on **Tools**, then **Options**.
- Click on the tab marked **Spelling & Grammar**.
- Ensure that the box labelled *Show readability statistics* is checked. Click **OK**.
- Now highlight the passage you want to check.
- Click on Tools then Spelling & Grammar.
- At the end of the spelling check, a box will appear showing you the readability statistics of the passage.
- The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level figure is equivalent to a school year so, to get the reading age, add five (because children in Year One are usually aged five).
- Note that in older versions of Word, the scale only goes up to 12, the final year of secondary school.

¹ It was invented by Robert Gunning in *The Technique of Clear Writing* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968) and updated since.

This handout was created by –

<http://www.see-a-voice.org/marketing-ad/effective-communication/readability/>

Other sources of information –

<http://www.thewriter.com/what-we-think/readability-checker/>

<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/about/faqs#q710>

<http://shop.niace.org.uk/readability.html>