Checking Readability
The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability Test

What is readability?
Readability is a measure of how easy a piece of text is to read.
The level of complexity of the text, its familiarity, legibility and typography all feed into how readable your text is.
Readability is a key factor in user experience. Accessible content builds trust with your audience.

https://readable.com/readability/what-is-readability/
Readability Matters at WCM

- At WCM, all informed consent forms (ICFs) must meet the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level 8 readability standards
  - Shorter sentences and words
  - Utilize vocabulary in a manner consistent with the comprehension of a 14-year-old
  - Use language a 9th grader can understand
- ICFs that do not fall within the Level 8 range may be returned by the IRB for revisions

The Flesch-Kincaid Readability Test

- Flesch Reading Ease Readability Formula (1948)
  \[ RE = 206.835 - (1.015 \times ASL) - (84.6 \times ASW) \]

- Flesch Grade Level Readability Formula (1976)
  - 90.0 - 100.0: average 5th grader
  - 60.0 - 70.0: 8th and 9th graders
  - 0.0 - 30.0: college graduates
  - The sweet spot!
How Do I Check My Score?

Instructions for PC Users

For PC Users

1. From within the document you’d like to score, select “File”, then go to “More” at the bottom of the menu, then “Options”
For PC Users

2. In the window that pops up, select “Proofing” in the sidebar menu

3. Toward the bottom of the screen, make sure “Show readability statistics” is selected
   Once you have verified the check box is selected, click “OK”

For PC Users

4. In your Word document, go to the “Review” toolbar and click on “Spelling and Grammar”
For PC Users

5. Once your Spelling & Grammar check is complete, click the “OK” button

6. A Readability Statistics window will pop up. The Flesch Kincaid Grade Level is your document’s score.

How Do I Check My Score?

Instructions for Mac Users
For Mac Users

1. From within the document you’d like to score, select Word > Preferences on the browser toolbar.
2. In the window that pops up, choose “Spelling & Grammar”.
3. Under the Grammar heading, make sure the check box next to “Show readability statistics” is selected.

Once you have verified the check box is selected, you may x out of the window.
For Mac Users

4. In your Word document, go to the “Review” toolbar and click on “Editor”

5. In the sidebar that pops up, click on the “Document Stats” button.
6. If you click on it again, you will receive this pop-up message:
For Mac Users

• Your Grade Level score

Interpreting your score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>School level (US)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100.00–90.00</td>
<td>5th grade</td>
<td>Very easy to read. Easily understood by an average 11-year-old student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90.0–80.0</td>
<td>6th grade</td>
<td>Easy to read. Conversational English for consumers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.0–70.0</td>
<td>7th grade</td>
<td>Fairly easy to read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70.0–60.0</td>
<td>8th &amp; 9th grade</td>
<td>Plain English. Easily understood by 13- to 15-year-old students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60.0–50.0</td>
<td>10th to 12th grade</td>
<td>Fairly difficult to read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.0–30.0</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Difficult to read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.0–10.0</td>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>Very difficult to read. Best understood by university graduates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.0–0.0</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Extremely difficult to read. Best understood by university graduates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Flesch, Rudolf. “How to Write Plain English”. University of Canterbury. Archived from the original on July 12, 2016