

Calculating Readability Statistics

There are several methods to assess reading level of written materials. Flesch-Kincaid is readily available in Microsoft Word. Flesch-Kincaid looks primarily at how many syllables are in each word and the length of each sentence. Word 2000 allows you to check up to grade level 12 and Word 2003 checks above grade level 12. (Modified document from Paul Smith, M.D.)

How to use Word to assess Flesch-Kincaid reading level:

1. At the top tool bar, click "Tools"
2. At bottom of the drop down list, click "Options"
3. On the tabs at the top of the new window, click the "Spelling & Grammar" tab
4. Near the bottom of the list, select "Check grammar with spelling" check box
5. Select "Show readability statistics" check box
6. Click "OK"
7. Click and drag to select text to check or check entire document
8. Click "Spelling and Grammar" on toolbar at top.
9. Check the entire document, skipping the grammar suggestions if you prefer.
10. Box with word count and readability statistics appears when you are done checking.

Note: You will find grade level differences between readability calculators (Flesch-Kincaid, SMOG, Fry formula, etc.) because they use different formulas.

