

The “SMOG” Readability Test (Short Version)

For materials containing > 30 sentences

1. Count off 10 consecutive sentences at the beginning, middle and end of the text.
2. Count the number of words with 3 or more syllables in the 30-sentence sample.
Answer: _____
3. Use the answer to step 2 to look up the reading grade level in the chart.

For materials containing < 30 sentences

1. Count the number of sentences: _____
2. Count the number of words with 3 or more syllables in the sample: _____
3. Divide the number of sentences in the sample into 30 (i.e., 30/25) and multiply this number by the number of words from step 2.
Answer: _____
4. Use the answer to step 3 to look up the reading grade level in the chart.

Note:

- A sentence is defined as a string of words punctuated with a period, exclamation point, or question mark.
- Hyphenated words are considered one word.
- Numbers should be considered as if they were written out (i.e. both “25” and “twenty-five” should be considered to have 3 or more syllables).
- Proper nouns should be considered
- Abbreviations should be considered in their unabbreviated form.

“SMOG” Conversion Chart

Number of words with 3 or more syllables in a 30 sentence sample:	Approximate Reading Grade Level (plus or minus 1.5 grades)
0 – 2	4
3 – 6	5
7 – 12	6
13 – 20	7
21 – 30	8
31 – 42	9
43 – 56	10
57 – 72	11
73 – 90	12
91 – 110	13
111 – 132	14
133 – 156	15
157 – 182	16

Reading level of this material: _____th Grade (plus or minus 1.5 grades)

To Learn More about Readability and Readability Assessments...

Reading Level References:

Readability testing in cancer communications: methods, examples, and resources for improving the readability of cancer messages and materials, National Cancer Institute (U.S.). Office of Cancer Communications, Bethesda, MD: Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Public Health Services, National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, 1979.

National Cancer Institute, Making health communication programs work. NIH Publication No. 02-5145 ed. 2001, Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Simplified Measure of Gobbledygoop (SMOG):

McLaughlin, G., SMOG grading: A new readability formula. *Journal of Reading*, 1969. 12(8): p. 639-646.

Fry Method of Readability Assessment:

Fry, E., Fry's readability graph: clarifications, validity, and extensions to level 17. *Journal of Reading*, 1977. 21: p. 242-252.

Fry, E., *Elementary reading instruction*. 1977: McGraw-Hill Companies.

Doak, C.C., L.G. Doak, J.H. Root, *Teaching patients with low literacy skills*. 2nd ed. 1996, Philadelphia: Lippincott Company.