The Indices of the Health Literacy Advisor

Name of Index	What it Measures	Type of Text to Evaluate	Grade index	What Matters!	HLI Rating
Fry-Based Grade Level	Average number of syllables per word & the average number of words per sentence, per 100 words paragraphs	Running text in all paragraphs	1st - college	• Preferred by many health literacy experts for accuracy and flexibility to score running text short and long documents • Assesses word syllables and sentences length • Can scan wide range of grades from 1st - 17th • Not ideal for questionnaires, forms, or surveys	**** ☺
Gunning-Fog Index	Average sentence length & the number of words with more than two syllables for each 100-word paragraph	Running text in all paragraphs	4th - college	• Not ideal for documents below 4th grade • Not ideal for questionnaires, forms, or surveys	* ☺
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	Average number of syllables per word & the average number of words per sentence	Running text in all paragraphs	5th - college	• Not ideal for documents below 5th grade • Scores documents at 1.5 or up to 3 grades lower than the actual readability of the document • Not ideal for questionnaires, forms, or surveys	* ☺
Flesch Reading Ease	Average number of syllables per word & the average number of words per sentence	Running text in all paragraphs	4th - college	• Scores based on points 0-100, not grades. The HLA is the only tool that translates the points into grade levels for this index • Not ideal for documents below 4th grade • Not ideal for questionnaires, forms, or surveys	** ☺
Precise SMOG index	Words of three or more syllables in every 30 sentences	All types of text including headings, bullets, lists, and running text in short paragraphs	7th - college	• The most accurate readability index • Does not assess long sentences, only words • Not ideal for documents below 7th grade • Not ideal for documents with a lot of paragraphs of text • Ideal for very easy-to-read documents	** ☺
Automated Readability Index (ARI)	Characters per word	All types of text including headings, bullets, lists, and running text in short paragraphs	N/A	• The least accurate readability index • Does not assess long sentences only words • Not ideal for documents with a lot of paragraphs of text • Ideal for very easy-to-read documents	* ☺
Coleman-Liau Index	Average number of characters per words (instead of syllables per word) & sentence length in a 100-word paragraph	Running text in all paragraphs	7th - college	• Not ideal for documents below 7th grade • Not ideal for questionnaires, forms, or surveys	* ☺
New Dale-Chall Formula	Average sentence length & the number of unfamiliar words in the *Dale-Chall Familiar Word List*, a list that most American 4th grade students could reliably understand	Running text in all paragraphs	5th - 12th	• If words/terms are not in the Dale-Chall list, this index may ignore medical terms even if they are long and hard-to-read words • Not ideal for documents below 5th grade and higher than 12th grade • Not ideal for health questionnaires, forms, or surveys	** ☺
FORCAST Readability Formula	Single syllables words	All types of text including headings, bullets, lists, and running text in short paragraphs	1st - college	• Does not assess long sentences, only words • Not ideal for documents with lots of paragraphs of text • Ideal for questionnaires, forms, surveys, and easy-to-read documents	** ☺

NOTES:

HLI Star Rating Scale: ** = highest rating: * = lowest**

☺ = If you are using the Health Literacy Advisor index to evaluate your documents, good news – you do NOT have to clean the document and remove bullets, headings, subheadings, etc.

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