Health Literacy Innovations™

# Health Communication That Works: Readability Made Simple


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Health Literacy Innovations™

## About Health Literacy Innovations (HLI)

**Mission –**

*Knowing that "literacy" is the single most important indicator of health outcomes,*
*HLI was founded to create tools to help eliminate medical mistakes and confusion due to low health literacy –*

**Flagship Product –**

The Health Literacy Advisor (HLA), the nation's first interactive health literacy software program

**Goals –**

- Streamline the health literacy review process
- Replace inefficiency with technology and knowledge
- Empower communicators with the tools to create, produce, print, display, share, and advertise clear health information

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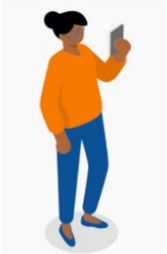
## Today's Webinar Goals

- ✓ Understanding the critical role of health literacy in improving patient outcomes
- ✓ Effective readability tools—and why all tools are not created equal
- ✓ Tips and tricks for easily simplifying complex health information

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## What is Health Literacy?

**Health literacy is a consumer's ability to:**



**Obtain**

**Read**

**Understand**

**Act on**

**health information and services**

**Brochures, consent forms, health videos, health information on the internet, etc.**

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## What is Health Literacy?

**The capacity of health care organizations to facilitate equitable access to health information and services.**



**Hospital signage, health education, how the system works, providers communication skills, etc.**

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## Health literacy is a two-way street which depends on:



**CONSUMER SKILLS:**

- Writing/reading
- Culture/language
- Calculating numbers
- Health care experience

**ORGANIZATION CAPACITY:**

- Health information access
- Culture/language access
- Navigation of health systems
- Health insurance access



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## The Problem



**In the US, only one of ten consumers have the skills needed to manage health and prevent disease.**

**Sixty-percent of all Medicaid recipients have the lowest level of health literacy.**

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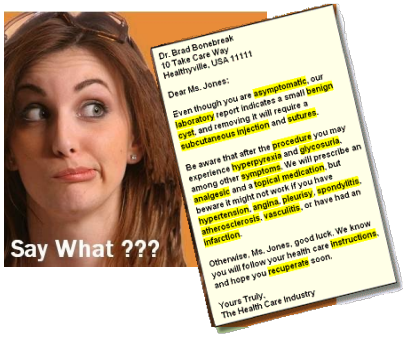
## The Problem

### Health Literacy Levels

**12% Proficient**
**52% Intermediate**
**36% Low**

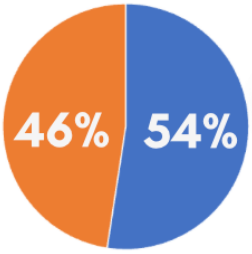
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**88% Under the proficient health literacy level**




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## The Problem




of Americans read below the sixth-grade reading level.

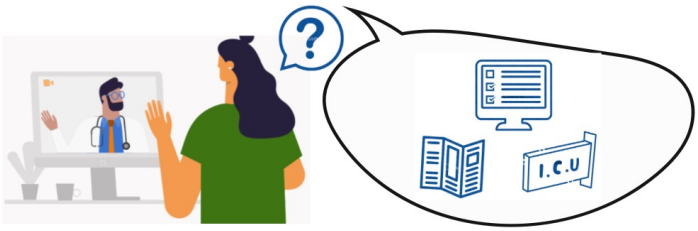


Yet, most health materials are written at a 10th grade reading level or higher.

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## The Problem

A lack of understanding of health information makes it more difficult to access and manage health care.




This is called LOW HEALTH LITERACY.

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## A Big Problem: Vulnerable Populations



- Older adults
- Consumers with low income and low educational levels
- Immigrants and non-English speakers
- Consumers who are overwhelmed — even those with good reading skills
- Consumers with chronic diseases
- Consumers with mental and/or physical developmental conditions

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## Who Has Low Health Literacy?

- Of the **87** **million people** with low health literacy skills, the majority are:

- White, English-speaking, American citizens



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## Health Care Costs Go Up

- **Low health literacy is estimated to cost the U.S. $352 billion in 2025.**
- This calculation is based on a 2003 estimate of $238 billion, adjusted for inflation using the *Consumer Price Index (CPI) calculator.*



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## Health Care Quality Goes Down

**Consumers with low health literacy:**

- Use **more treatment** and emergency services
- Have **more hospital stays** and readmissions
- Often **cannot follow** their treatment
- Have **higher mortality** rates

**Low health literacy contributes to health disparities.**

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## What to do?




**Improving health literacy could save Medicare $25.4 billion each year.**

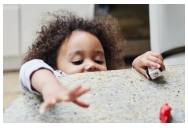
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## Health Information Overload

**Simple health care terms frequently misunderstood**

COBRA ≠ 

HYPERTENSION ≠ 


OVER THE COUNTER ≠ 

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## Health Information Overload

**Creates:**

- Confusion
- Frustration
- Discontinuation of treatment



**Health professionals should focus on making content accurate, accessible, and actionable.**

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## Why Creating Accessible Health Information Matters?

At virtually every point along the health care spectrum, the health care industry requires consumers to read and understand important health care information, making the task of producing easy-to-read information an **industry obligation**, and a **legal and moral challenge.**



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# Readability of Health Information

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## What is Readability?

**Is a way of measuring the ease or difficulty of health information.**



**Why measure readability?**

**It is important to:**

- Understand how difficult the information is before distribution
- Ensure the content is clear for the intended audience
- Determine whether the text needs to be simplified
- Produce high-quality content
- Compare documents before and after editing
- Meet readability requirements

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## What makes some text easier to read and understand than others?

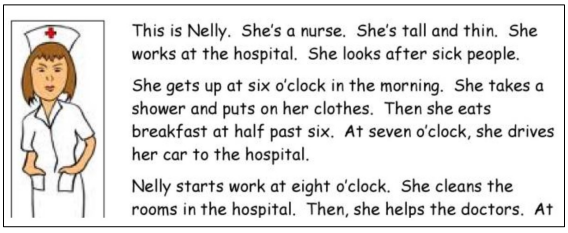
**Readability is affected by the following factors:**

- ❑The reader's knowledge of/and interest in the subject
- ❑The complexity of the subject
- ❑Wording and length of sentences
- ❑Organization of the content
- ❑Writing style
- ❑Overall appeal
- ❑Design elements, including colors
- ❑Layout and format
- ❑Visuals and other non-text features

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## What makes some text easier to read and understand than others?

❑Layout and format



This is Nelly. She's a nurse. She's tall and thin. She works at the hospital. She looks after sick people.

She gets up at six o'clock in the morning. She takes a shower and puts on her clothes. Then she eats breakfast at half past six. At seven o'clock, she drives her car to the hospital.

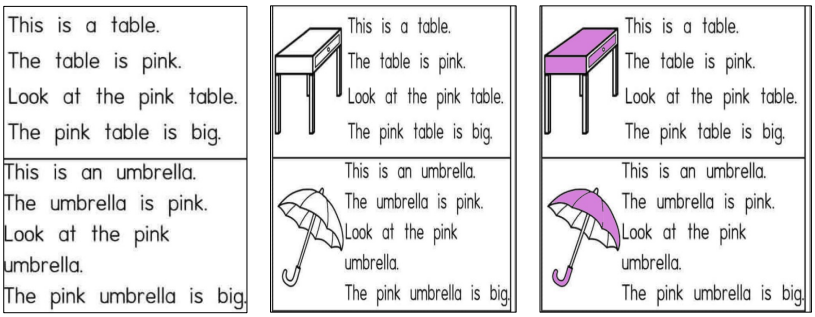
Nelly starts work at eight o'clock. She cleans the rooms in the hospital. Then, she helps the doctors. At

Name: Class: Read and answer the questions please. This is Nelly. She's a nurse. She's tall and thin. She works at the hospital. She looks after sick people. She gets up at six o'clock in the morning. She takes a shower and puts on her clothes. Then she eats breakfast at half past six. At seven o'clock, she drives her car to the hospital. Nelly starts work at eight o'clock. She cleans the rooms in the hospital. Then, she helps the doctors. At twelve o'clock, she has lunch. She goes home at five o'clock. At home, she takes a shower and she cooks dinner. She has dinner at half past six in the evening. Then, she watches TV. At ten o'clock, she goes to

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## What makes some text easier to read and understand than others?

❑Design elements, including colors

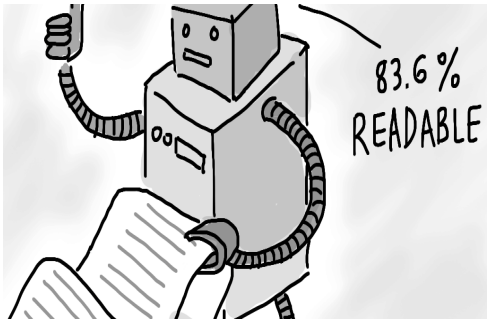





## The Measuring Tools

- **For Literacy of Consumers:**
  Professionals use tools often called *tests* or *surveys,* i.e.
  - NAAL-2003
- **For Health Literacy of Consumers:**
  There is not yet a comprehensive measure of health literacy.
  Current measurements include:
  - Assessing patients' understanding of words and numeracy skills related to health information, i.e.
    - Newest Vital Sign (NVS), the Rapid Estimate of Adult Literacy in Medicine (REALM), and the Test of Functional Health Literacy in Adults (TOFHLA)
  - Assessing health care providers and systems from the patients' perspective, i.e.
    - CAHPS (Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems)
- **For Readability of Information:**
  Writers use tools called *readability indices/formulas*, *tests*, or *scales*.

## Readability Made Simple




Tips to remember, will be highlighted

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## Readability Indices What Are They?

- They are tools that provide valuable insights into how easy your text is to understand.
  - This directly impacts how well consumers engage with information, learn your message and act on it.
- Writers have been using readability tools since the 1920s.
- Many of these tools have been validated through research by their original authors.
- There are over 200 different readability indices available in English.
- There are some indices in other languages, i.e.

  Lix and Rix are two versions of the same formula:
  - They measure readability based on letter counting.
  - One study focused on the use of Lix with French, German, Greek and English texts.

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## Readability Indices
## How They Work?

- Most tools use mathematical calculations – formulas to measure reading level.
- Some use a comparison against selected list of words to measure reading level.
  - New Dale-Chall
- Some can be hand and/or electronically tabulated, i.e.
  - Fry Graph
  - SMOG
- Some are only electronically tabulated, i.e.
  - Automated Readability Index (ARI)
  - Coleman-Liau Index (CLI)



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## Readability Indices
## What Do They Measure?

- **Sentence Length:**
  - Longer sentences are considered more difficult to read and understand.
- **Word Complexity:**
  - Using too many long words can make a text harder to read and understand.
  - Using too much complex language can make a text harder to read and understand.
- **Word Frequency:**
  - Words that are less frequently used *(health care jargon)* are also considered more challenging.
- **These indices do not measure health vocabulary familiarity**
  - Hyperlipidemia = 6 syllables
  - Myocardium = 4 syllables
  - Cobra = 2 syllables (still might be confusing and misunderstood)

Overview of Alopecia Areata

Alopecia areata is a disease that happens when the immune system attacks hair follicles and causes hair loss. Hair follicles are the structures in skin that form hair. While hair can be lost from any part of the body, alopecia areata usually affects the head and face. Hair typically falls out in small, round patches about the size of a quarter, but in some cases, hair loss is more extensive. Most people with the disease are healthy and have no other symptoms.

The course of alopecia areata varies from person to person. Some have bouts of hair loss throughout their lives, while others only have one episode. Recovery is unpredictable too, with hair regrowing fully in some people but not others.

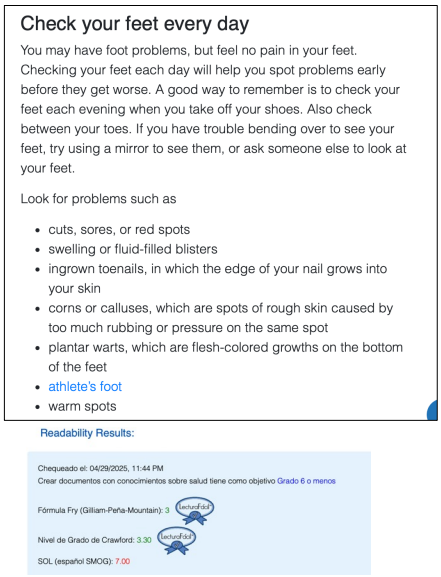
There is no cure for alopecia areata, but there are treatments that help hair grow back more quickly. There are also resources to help people cope with hair loss.

Fry-based Grade Level: 8
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level: 7.80
Precise SMOG Index: 9.90

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# Readability Indices
# What Do They Score?

- Readability indices estimate how many years of education a person needs to understand a given text.
- Result vary in how they are reported:
  - For example, some provide a grade level—**such as 6th grade**—indicating that a sixth grader should be able to read the text.
  - Others, like the Flesch Reading Ease, give a number between 1 and 100 as a score.



Check your feet every day

You may have foot problems, but feel no pain in your feet. Checking your feet each day will help you spot problems early before they get worse. A good way to remember is to check your feet each evening when you take off your shoes. Also check between your toes. If you have trouble bending over to see your feet, try using a mirror to see them, or ask someone else to look at your feet.

Look for problems such as

- cuts, sores, or red spots
- swelling or fluid-filled blisters
- ingrown toenails, in which the edge of your nail grows into your skin
- corns or calluses, which are spots of rough skin caused by too much rubbing or pressure on the same spot
- plantar warts, which are flesh-colored growths on the bottom of the feet
- athlete's foot
- warm spots

Readability Results:

Chequeado el: 04/29/2025, 11:44 PM
Crear documentos con conocimientos sobre salud tiene como objetivo Grado 6 o menos

Fórmula Fry (Gilliam-Peña-Mountain): 3

Nivel de Grado de Crawford: 3.30

SOL (español SMOG): 7.00

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# Readability Indices
# How Do They Work?

- They will never have the same results.
- They use different formulas, counting systems and assess different types of text.

**Flesch Reading Ease Score**

This score is related to Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level index, but it produces a score between 0 and 100 rather than a grade level score.

$$206.835 - 1.015\left(\frac{\text{words}}{\text{sentences}}\right) - 84.6\left(\frac{\text{syllables}}{\text{words}}\right)$$

**Coleman-Liau Index**

The Coleman-Liau Index, like the ARI but unlike most of the other indexes, relies on characters instead of syllables per word.

$$5.89\left(\frac{\text{characters}}{\text{words}}\right) - 0.3\left(\frac{\text{sentences}}{100 \times \text{words}}\right) - 15.8$$

**SMOG**

$$\text{grade} = 1.0430\sqrt{\text{number of polysyllables} \times \frac{30}{\text{number of sentences}}} + 3.1291$$

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# Popular Readability Indices in Health Care

**Fry Readability Formula**

- Average Sentence Length:
  - Counts the number of words in sentences—in a 100-word sample—to determine complexity.
- Number of Syllables:
  - Counts syllables—in a 100-word sample—to measure vocabulary difficulty.
- The intersection of these factors determines the reading level of the text in grade levels or age
  - Scores materials from first grade through college levels
  - Counts a combination of sentence and word length

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# Popular Readability Indices in Health Care

**Fry Readability Formula:**

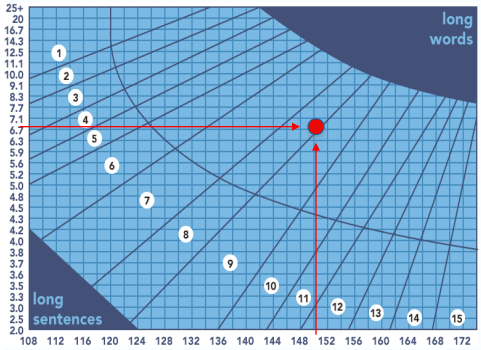
In each set of 100 words

1: Syllables = 149 Sentences= 7.3

2: Syllables = 142 Sentences= 6.2

3: Syllables = 163 Sentences= 6.9

**151.33** **6.8**




**Grade 8th**

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# Popular Readability Indices in Health Care

## SMOG

- Short for "Simple Measure of Gobbledygook"
- Counts word of 3 or more syllables
- Scores materials from 4th grade to college level
- Does not count sentence length
- May produce grade level scores that are one to two grades higher

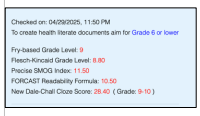
**Known as the most reliable readability index:**

- Showing strong correlations with standardized reading comprehension tests.

**SMOG Conversion Table**

| Total polysyllabic word counts | Approximate grade level (+/- 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 |
| 183-210 | 17 |
| 211-240 | 18 |






# Popular Readability Indices in Health Care

## Flesh Reading Ease

- Measures the total number of words, the number of syllables, and the total number of sentences.
- Scores materials from 4th grade through college
- Produces a score between 0 and 100
  - This score needs to be converted into an approximate grade level
- The higher the number the lower the reading level

**Flesch Reading Ease Score Interpretation:**

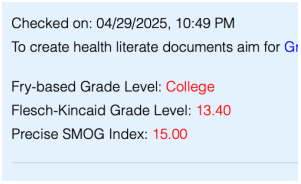
| Score | Style | Estimated School Grade Completed |
|---|---|---|
| 90 to 100 | Very Easy | 4th |
| 80 to 90 | Easy | 5th |
| 70 to 80 | Fairly Easy | 6th |
| 60 to 70 | Standard | 7th to 8th |
| 50 to 60 | Fairly Difficult | Some High School |
| 30 to 50 | Difficult | High School or Some College |
| 0 to 30 | Very Difficult | College |

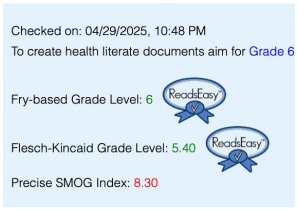
*Health literacy Advisor*
*Provides a score conversion to grade level*

# Popular Readability Indices in Health Care

**Flesch-Kincaid**

- Measures the average total number of words, the number of syllables, and the total number of sentences.
- Scores materials from 5th grade to college.
- May give a result between 1.5 to 3.00 grade lower, than what the document is.

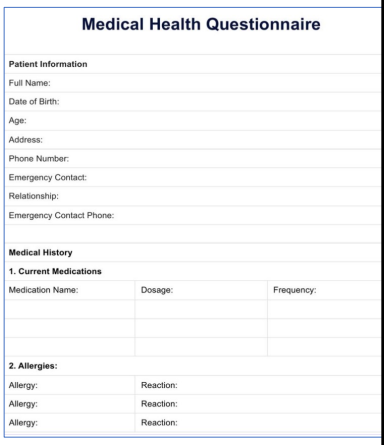



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# FORCAST Formula

- It doesn't measure complete sentences.
- It counts all words.
- Useful for evaluating text that has little or no paragraphs.
- Is good for surveys, questionnaires or multiple-choice tests.



**Medical Health Questionnaire**

**Patient Information**

Full Name:
Date of Birth:
Age:
Address:
Phone Number:
Emergency Contact:
Relationship:
Emergency Contact Phone:

**Medical History**

**1. Current Medications**

| Medication Name: | Dosage: | Frequency: |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |

**2. Allergies:**

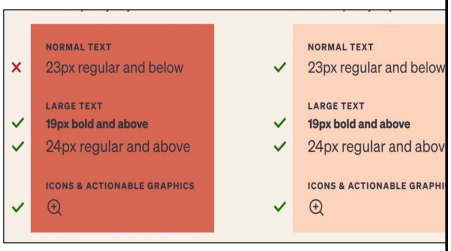
| Allergy: | Reaction: |
|---|---|
| Allergy: | Reaction: |
| Allergy: | Reaction: |

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## Readability Indices were not designed to measure:

- If words are familiar to the reader
- The reader's prior knowledge on the subject
- Complexity of the ideas being conveyed
- User friendly design elements:
  - Layout/format
  - **Text size/type**
  - **Color contrast**
- Plain language and health literacy principles
- Organization of information
- Content appeal:
  - Gender appropriateness
  - Cultural relevance
- Translation

**Is it legible?**

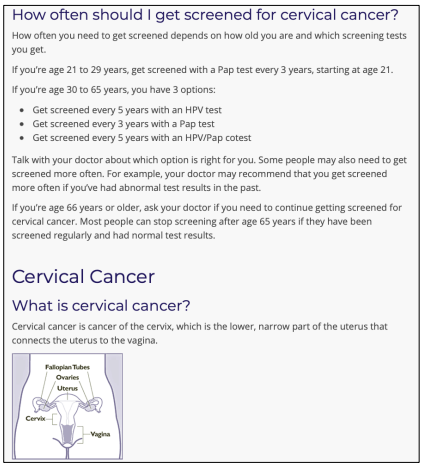



**Font size: 12 and up**

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## Caution About Most Electronic Readability Indices

- May limit the amount of text they review.
- May give the user a false number of shorter sentences when they count the periods at the end of acronyms, semicolons, exclamation and question marks.
- May require users to clean up a document before doing a readability assessment, which includes ignoring text features, such as bullets, titles, subheadings, and other types of punctuation.



How often should I get screened for cervical cancer?

How often you need to get screened depends on how old you are and which screening tests you get.

If you're age 21 to 29 years, get screened with a Pap test every 3 years, starting at age 21.

If you're age 30 to 65 years, you have 3 options:

- Get screened every 5 years with an HPV test
- Get screened every 3 years with a Pap test
- Get screened every 5 years with an HPV/Pap cotest

Talk with your doctor about which option is right for you. Some people may also need to get screened more often. For example, your doctor may recommend that you get screened more often if you've had abnormal test results in the past.

If you're age 66 years or older, ask your doctor if you need to continue getting screened for cervical cancer. Most people can stop screening after age 65 years if they have been screened regularly and had normal test results.

Cervical Cancer

What is cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer is cancer of the cervix, which is the lower, narrow part of the uterus that connects the uterus to the vagina.



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## AI Readability Assessment

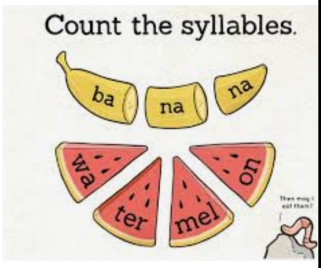
**AI & Health Literacy:**

- Ongoing research needed, preliminary information finds both good and bad results in health care in general, and to simplify health information
- May cause security issues for heath care organizations
- Many health care organizations are prohibiting their teams from using AI
- Future use of AI in health literacy – in progress and unknown

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## Caution About Most Electronic Readability Indices

- **Can give the user a false number of shorter words because:**
  - In English, there is not a standard rule for counting the number of syllables.
  - Many programs do not have a large database of already determined word breaks.
- **Some tools may count only characters to determine long words:**
  - However, some indices are designed to count syllables/words not characters.
- **Most tools do not assess health care terms:**
  - Hyperlipidemia: 14 characters/6 syllables

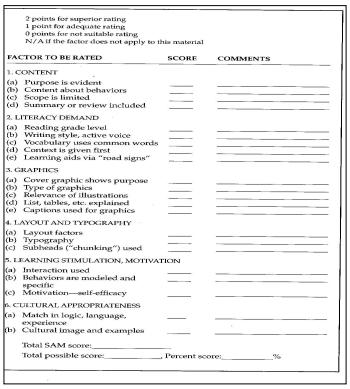



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# Usability Tools

- **In addition to using indices use usability/suitability tools.**
- These tools rate materials in the following areas:
  - content
  - literacy demand
  - graphics
  - layout
  - text type
  - learning motivation
  - cultural appropriateness
- Other usability tools:
  - AHRQ-Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool (PEMAT)
  - CDC Clear Communication Index (CCI)
  - HLI- REDA (ReadsEasy Document Assessment)



2 points for superior rating
1 point for adequate rating
0 points for not suitable rating
N/A if the factor does not apply to this material

| FACTOR TO BE RATED | SCORE | COMMENTS |
|---|---|---|
| 1. CONTENT | | |
| (a) Purpose is evident | ____ | |
| (b) Content about behaviors | ____ | |
| (c) Scope is limited | ____ | |
| (d) Summary or review included | ____ | |
| 2. LITERACY DEMAND | | |
| (a) Reading grade level | ____ | |
| (b) Writing style, active voice | ____ | |
| (c) Vocabulary uses common words | ____ | |
| (d) Context is given first | ____ | |
| (e) Learning aids via "road signs" | ____ | |
| 3. GRAPHICS | | |
| (a) Cover graphic shows purpose | ____ | |
| (b) Type of graphics | ____ | |
| (c) Relevance of illustrations | ____ | |
| (d) List, tables, etc. explained | ____ | |
| (e) Captions used for graphics | ____ | |
| 4. LAYOUT AND TYPOGRAPHY | | |
| (a) Layout factors | ____ | |
| (b) Typography | ____ | |
| (c) Subheads ("chunking") used | ____ | |
| 5. LEARNING STIMULATION, MOTIVATION | | |
| (a) Interaction used | ____ | |
| (b) Behaviors are modeled and specific | ____ | |
| (c) Motivation—self-efficacy | ____ | |
| 6. CULTURAL APPROPRIATENESS | | |
| (a) Match in logic, language, experience | ____ | |
| (b) Cultural image and examples | ____ | |

Total SAM score: _____
Total possible score: _____ Percent score: _____ %

**Usability Assessment of Material-SAM**
Is included in the book: *Doak, Doak &Root's Teaching Patients with Low Literacy Skills, Second Edition, J.B.*



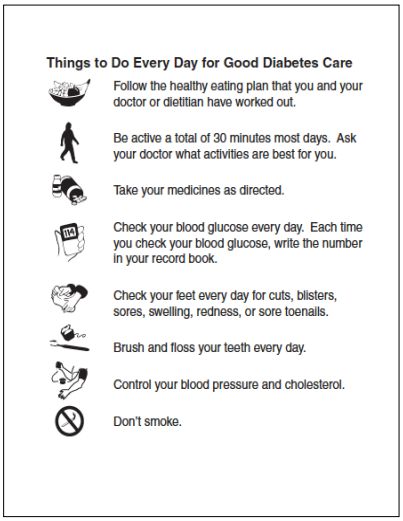
Health Literacy Innovations™

# Tips and Tricks for Simplifying Complex Health Information



## Tips to Meet the Literacy Demand

- **Break long sentences into shorter ones:**
  - 4th grade, keep an average of 10-13 words long.
  - 6th grade, keep an average of 13-16 words long.
  - 8th grade, keep an average of 15-20 words long.
- **Use plain language:**
  - Short words
  - Common terms
  - Definitions of health terms



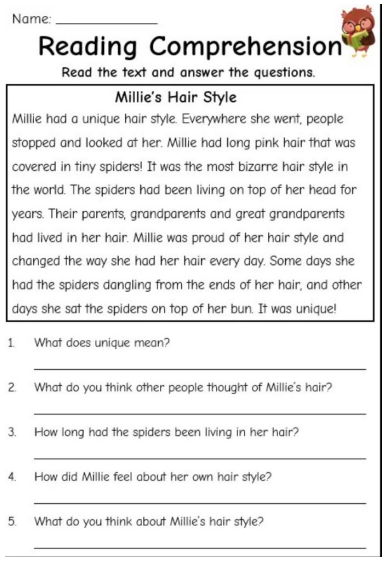
**Things to Do Every Day for Good Diabetes Care**

- Follow the healthy eating plan that you and your doctor or dietitian have worked out.
- Be active a total of 30 minutes most days. Ask your doctor what activities are best for you.
- Take your medicines as directed.
- Check your blood glucose every day. Each time you check your blood glucose, write the number in your record book.
- Check your feet every day for cuts, blisters, sores, swelling, redness, or sore toenails.
- Brush and floss your teeth every day.
- Control your blood pressure and cholesterol.
- Don't smoke.

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## Tips to Meet the Literacy Demand

- **Readability and comprehension:**
  - Check readability
  - Check suitability
  - Aim for 6th grade reading level or lower
  - Test with audience
- **Words to avoid:**
  - Words with more than 2 syllables
  - Medical jargon and technical words
  - Abbreviations
  - Unfamiliar acronyms – *HMO and AIDS*
  - Statistics
  - Concept words - *COBRA*
  - Value-judgment words - *bad-mouth*
  - Negative words- *fat*
  - Contractions



Name: _____

**Reading Comprehension**

Read the text and answer the questions.

**Millie's Hair Style**

Millie had a unique hair style. Everywhere she went, people stopped and looked at her. Millie had long pink hair that was covered in tiny spiders! It was the most bizarre hair style in the world. The spiders had been living on top of her head for years. Their parents, grandparents and great grandparents had lived in her hair. Millie was proud of her hair style and changed the way she had her hair every day. Some days she had the spiders dangling from the ends of her hair, and other days she sat the spiders on top of her bun. It was unique!

1. What does unique mean?
2. What do you think other people thought of Millie's hair?
3. How long had the spiders been living in her hair?
4. How did Millie feel about her own hair style?
5. What do you think about Millie's hair style?

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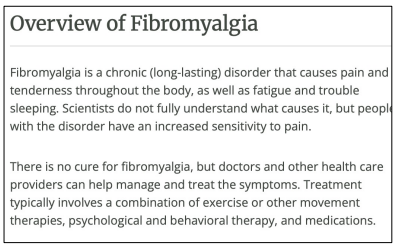
# Tips to Meet the Literacy Demand

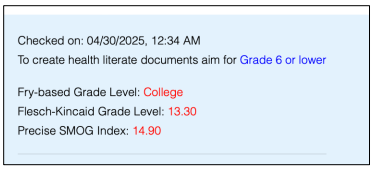
**Keep information clear:**

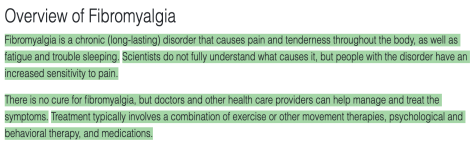
- Use conversational style
- Use active voice:
  - Liz took the medicine.
  - The medicine was taken by Liz.

**Layout and Format:**

- Include short paragraphs (2-3 sentences).
- Use headings, subheadings and bullets.
- Leave lots of white space.



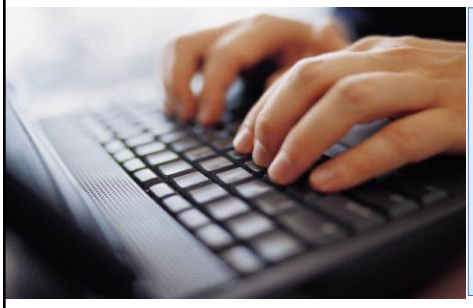




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Health Literacy Advisor

## Readability + Usability + Health Literacy + More

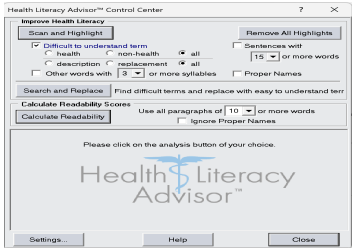


**One comprehensive solution!**

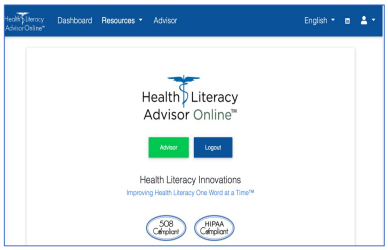
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## The Health Literacy Advisor
## Created by Health Literacy Innovations

**HLA Desktop (Add-in to Word)**




**HLA Online (web-based version)**




- ✓ **English (Nine readability indices)**
- ✓ **English/Spanish (Six readability indices)**

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## Health Literacy Advisor Features

### Highlights Words

- Long words by database
- Long words by syllable count
- Medical terms and jargon
- Proper names/nouns

**About Myocardial Infarction**

Myocardial infarction is the leading cause of death in the United States. Studies demonstrate that more myocardial infarctions happen on Monday morning.

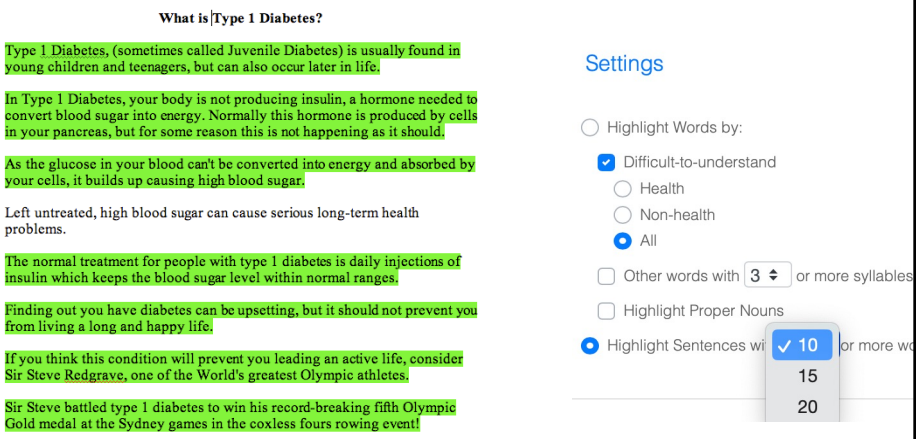
**Medical History**

There are genetic triggers that frequently increase the likelihood of having cardiac difficulties. Unfortunately, you cannot alter these genetic risk factors; nonetheless, you can reduce your likelihood of myocardial infarction.

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# Health Literacy Advisor Features

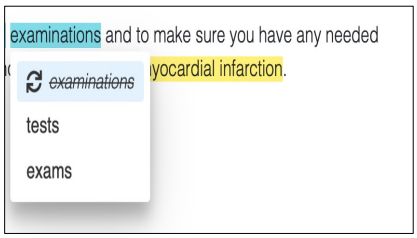
## Highlights Long Sentences

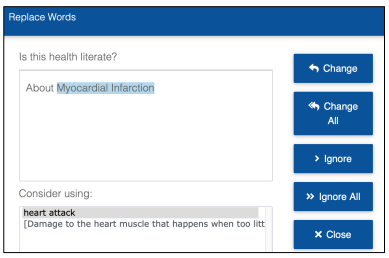





# Health Literacy Advisor Feature

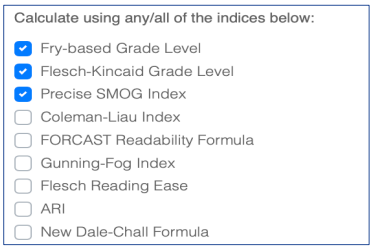
- **Search** difficult terms and **replace** them with easy-to-understand choices right on your document
- Provides health related glossary in plain language
- Includes definitions for health terms

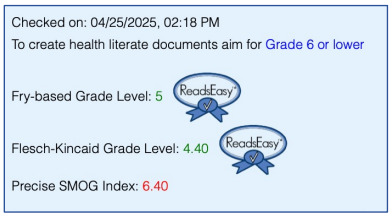


# Health Literacy Advisor Features

- **Calculates readability** by using up to nine differently readability indices.
- **Creates detailed reports** that include the reading level of the document, the number of words, syllables and sentences.
- **Stamps results on the document:**
  - Name of document
  - Date of evaluation
  - Readability scores by indices
- **Rewards users** with a "Reads Easy" stamp for achieving the 6th grade reading level or lower.




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## 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<br>• Assesses word syllables and sentences length<br>• Can scan wide range of grades from 1st - 17th<br>• 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<br>• 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<br>• Scores documents at 1.5 or up to 3 grades lower than the actual readability of the document<br>• 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<br>• Not ideal for documents below 4th grade<br>• 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<br>• Does not assess long sentences, only words<br>• Not ideal for documents below 7th grade<br>• Not ideal for documents with a lot of paragraphs of text<br>• 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<br>• Does not assess long sentences only words<br>• Not ideal for documents with a lot of paragraphs of text<br>• 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<br>• 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<br>• Not ideal for documents below 5th grade and higher than 12th grade<br>• 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<br>• Not ideal for documents with lots of paragraphs of text<br>• 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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## Benefits of the HLA

**Produces a more accurate grade reading level because:**

- It scans the entire document, either short documents or multi-pages.
- Taps into a database of more than 118,000 words with accurate syllable counts.
- Syllable count match the syllable-counting system of indices.

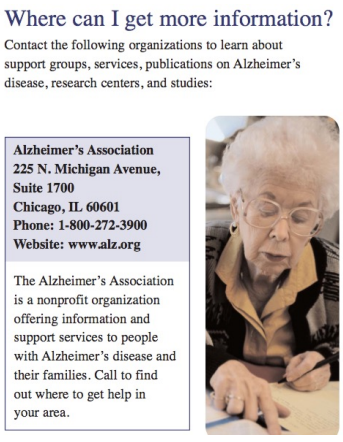


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## Unique Health Literacy Advisor Features:

**Electronically cleans documents before assessing reading levels:**

- bullets
- headings and subheadings
- addresses
- phone numbers
- e-mails and URLs
- proper nouns
- symbols




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## Unique Health Literacy Advisor Features:

**Provides you with its own electronic suitability tool REDA (ReadsEasy Document Assessment):**

It is a ten-part checklist that focuses on evaluating:

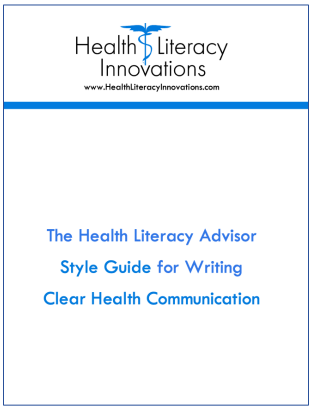
- Readability
- Comprehension
- Actionability of materials
- User-friendly design and format
- Appropriateness
- Numeracy
- Usability testing
- Plain language, health literacy principles
- Translation principles

**It provides you with a certificate when you achieve the REDA passing grade.**



## Benefits of the HLA

- Evaluates the document any time in the editing process.
- The health literacy review process is efficient and fast.
- Offers downloadable *Style Guide for Writing Clear Health Communications*



## Remember
## Electronic Editing/Readability Tools:

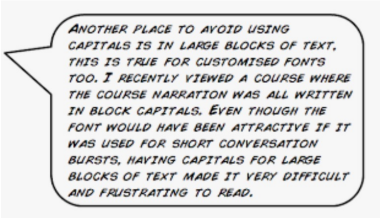
- Most tools assist writers in the evaluation and editing process
- Some provide
  - suggestions for improvement
  - readability formulas
  - text statistics
- Most are designed for general text not health
- Most do not clean the document
- Some could give inaccurate readability scores

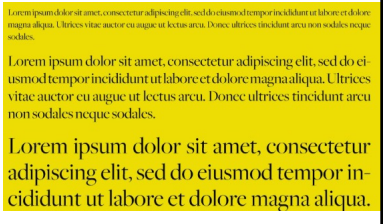
**Few, such as the Health Literacy Advisor, are designed for health, plain language and health literacy.**

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## Remember to Assess your Materials for:

- Plain language – use short words
- Reading level – not higher than 6th grade
- Jargon free – replace with common words
- Relevant content – only say what is needed
- Learning motivation- only write what the reader needs
- Graphics that work
- Good layout and typography




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# Questions?

**Contact us:**
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Sales@HealthLiteracyInnovations.com
www.HealthLiteracyInnovations.com

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