

Does your blog pass the Flesch test?

BLOG



As a blogger, even before you hit the publish button, there's criticism coming from Flesch. You probably have your own personal criticism about the post you just wrote. But, unknown to you Flesch has already assessed your abilities.

Some word processing programs and the Yoast SEO plugin use the Flesch Reading Ease feature. It automatically scans and scores your blog post for ease of readability and grade level comprehension.

Why should you care?

In this age of competitive media attention for eyeballs, any reader is going to give you only a few seconds of their time. Better readability

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- Slows down scanning speed

- Increases attention span
- Increases comprehension retention
- Provides greater recognition and clarity of key points
- Increases likelihood of reader return
- Enhances SEO ranking and decreases bounce rate
- Follows the trend towards brevity

In 1948, writing authority and consultant, Rudolph Flesch was a supporter of the Plain English movement. He focused on using phonics and measuring the readability of school textbooks.

Flesch introduced an algorithmic formula based on averages: the number of words per sentence and syllables per word. The results are converted into ease of reading scores and grade level reading standards.

The Flesch-Kincaid Ease of Reading test is a modification first made by the U.S. Navy and then used by the Department of Defense. Other governmental agencies adopted it to ensure consistent and appropriate reading level documents. It's what we owe to today's somewhat more readable contracts, training manuals and public reports.

The Flesch-Kincaid Score Comparison

If you're curious about the rating of your latest blog, you can click [here](#) for a free calculator and compare your score to the chart below.

Score	School Level	Notes
90.0–100.0	5th grade	Very easy to read. Understood by average 11-year-old.
80.0–90.0	6th grade	Easy to read. Conversational English for consumers.
70.0–80.0	7th grade	Fairly easy to read.
60.0–70.0	8th & 9th grade	Plain English. Easily understood by 13- to 15-year-old.
50.0–60.0	10th to 12th grade	Fairly difficult to read.
30.0–50.0	College	Difficult to read.

0.0–30.0	College graduate	Very difficult to read. Best understood by university graduates.
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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flesch%E2%80%93Kincaid_readability_tests

Should you be concerned with your Flesch score?

Yes and No.

Yes, as far as it makes it easier for readers to stay connected and get value out of what you've posted.

No, in the sense you don't want to turn into a robotic writer of short sentences and monosyllabic words. Nor, do you want to lose your voice, your writing character or distinctive style.

You know your audience and if they can handle the polysyllabic "big" words, long sentences and stimulating vocabulary.

Compromising Tips

However, we need to remind ourselves that writing and verbal communication is always changing within cultures. Today, we write far more informally. Our language is so flexible that we can express meaning in abbreviations, acronyms, cryptic texts and emojis. We've also become skilled at using less words thanks to Twitter.

We can still improve blog readability without sacrificing our style

- Write with clarity, even if it means smaller and less glamorous words
- Limit jargon, buzz words and keyword stuffing
- Use more active and less passive words ending in "ing"
- Restrict texting style to mobile communication
- Chunk down big concepts and ideas into bite size pieces
- Use subheading and bullet points judiciously ("big" word, couldn't resist)
- Edit down and then edit down again
- Double check spelling and grammar

The Flesch score for this post is 60.1. Some tweaks have brought me

right to the edge of being less difficult to read. But, being the bright, intelligent audience that you are, I'm sure you can handle it.

How readable is your blog?

Resources:

<http://www.readabilityformulas.com/flesch-reading-ease-readability-formula.php>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flesch%E2%80%93Kincaid_readability_tests
<https://yoast.com/flesch-reading-ease-score/>

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