

Policy Development

---

Date Published: September 2023

## Writing Tools - Information on Interpreting the Scores

Follow this and additional works at: <https://collections.uhsp.edu/policydevelopment>

---

### Recommended Citation

"Writing Tools - Information on Interpreting the Scores" (2023). *Policy Development*. 8.  
<https://collections.uhsp.edu/policydevelopment/8>

This Other is brought to you for free and open access by UHSP Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in Policy Development by an authorized administrator of UHSP Collections. For more information, please contact [jill.nissen@uhsp.edu](mailto:jill.nissen@uhsp.edu).

# Evaluating the Readability of Content

To evaluate the readability of copy in articles, letters and other print materials, Marketing and Communications uses the Flesch-Kincaid readability tests. These tests use metrics such as word length and sentence length to determine how difficult copy will be to understand. These tests are often used (and in some states, legally required) to evaluate the readability of legal documents and policy language.

## Flesch Reading Ease

The Flesch reading ease test scores copy on a scale of 0-100. A score of 100 indicates writing that is very easy to understand, and a score of 0 indicates writing that is very difficult to understand. The audience, purpose and subject of the material will influence the target readability score.

## Flesch Kincaid Grade Level Formula

The grade level formula builds on the Flesch reading ease test to identify a U.S. grade level appropriate for a piece of writing. Together, these benchmarks give writers a sense of how copy might perform with the target audience.

## Flesch-Kincaid Benchmarks

Flesch Score	Readability	Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	Representative Writing
0-29	Very difficult	Best understood by college or university graduates.	Scientific journals, insurance policies, legal documents
30-49	Difficult	Easily understood by average college students.	Academic magazines and reviews (Harvard Law Review, New York Times)
50-59	Fairly difficult	Easily understood by average high school seniors.	Editorial and industry magazines (Newsweek, Time, Atlantic Monthly)
60-69	Standard	Easily understood by average readers 8 <sup>th</sup> - and 9 <sup>th</sup> -graders	Consumer magazines and digests (Sports Illustrated, Reader's Digest)
70-79	Fairly easy	Easily understood by average 7 <sup>th</sup> -graders.	Science fiction, screen ads
80-89	Easy	Easily understood by average 6 <sup>th</sup> -graders.	Pop fiction, consumer print ads
90-100	Very easy	Easily understood by average 5 <sup>th</sup> -graders.	Comic books, teen literature