

# PRACTICAL WORKSHOP

## Simple Measure Of Gobbledygook

### BRIEF

You are to select three sources of text and conduct a SMOG Index, readability test to measure their complexity and approximate reading age.

- 1) Conduct a manual SMOG test on two external sources, such as a book, magazine or newspaper.
- 2a) Conduct a manual SMOG test on your own text; for example, your conclusion/essay from Unit 10.
- 2b) Upload your text to the website below for more detailed results.

[www.webpagefx.com/tools/read-able](http://www.webpagefx.com/tools/read-able)

### OBJECTIVES

The learners will:

- **Select** a range of texts, from multiple sources, including own material.
- **Breakdown** the texts and **Isolate** the polysyllabic words to form calculation.
- **Experiment** with manipulating texts, to increase/decrease their readability.
- **Measure** the overall effectiveness of SMOG to aid in writing legible copy.

### EVIDENCE

- Documentation of all SMOG results.

### CHALLENGE

Start examining ways to increase or decrease the readability, based on a particular target audience.

**Synonyms are your friends!**

### HOW TO SMOG TEST

1) Take 30 sentences from your chosen text; if the text is too short, then acquire the other sentences from texts by the same author/source. For example, if the text is from a social media site, then take 10 sentences from one article, 10 from another, etc.

2) Count the number of all polysyllabic\* words in the 30 sentences.

3) Calculate the square root of that number and round it up to the nearest whole. For example; 30 sentences taken from The Guardians website contained 171 polysyllabic words:

$$171 \sqrt{=} 13.07 \text{ (Round up)} = 14$$

SMOG Index = 14

4) To work out the approximate reading age, simply add 7 to the S.M.O.G Index. This then produces an approximate reading age of 21.

\* For the purpose of this investigation, only count words that have three or more syllables.

### GOBBLEDYGOOK

Even if a piece of text has gone through a readability calculator and resulted in the target age, its overall structure and language could still be nonsense. For an idea, see:

[www.artbollocks.com](http://www.artbollocks.com)

**TEST RESULTS:**  
Your text has an average grade level of about 9. It should be easily understood by 14 to 15 year olds.

**READABILITY INDICES**

Flesch Kincaid Reading Ease	69.3	
Flesch Kincaid Grade Level	8.6	
Gunning Fog Score	11.4	
SMOG Index	8	
Coleman Liau Index	8.9	
Automated Readability Index	8.4	

**TEXT STATISTICS**

No. of sentences	30
No. of words	606
No. of complex words	56
Percent of complex words	9.24%
Average words per sentence	20.20
Average syllables per word	1.38

The Lad Bible

**TEST RESULTS:**  
Your text has an average grade level of about 15. It should be easily understood by 20 to 21 year olds.

**READABILITY INDICES**

Flesch Kincaid Reading Ease	33.8	
Flesch Kincaid Grade Level	15.1	
Gunning Fog Score	18	
SMOG Index	13.8	
Coleman Liau Index	14.3	
Automated Readability Index	15.9	

**TEXT STATISTICS**

No. of sentences	30
No. of words	794
No. of complex words	171
Percent of complex words	21.54%
Average words per sentence	26.47
Average syllables per word	1.73

The Guardian Newspaper