

Using SMOG Reading Level

Perhaps the quickest way to check a reading level manually is to use the SMOG estimating formula. G. Harry McLaughlin created SMOG (Simply Measure of Gobbledegook) in 1969 to estimate the years of education needed to understand a piece of writing.

Here's a quick way to estimate reading level.

- Simply count the number of words with three or more syllables in three chains of 10 sentences in different parts of your draft.
- Then look up the approximate grade level in this chart.
- The SMOG formula can predict the grade level difficulty within 1.5 grades in 68 percent of passages.

Total Polysyllabic Word Counts	Approximate Grade Level
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	college-level

Developed by Harold C. McGraw, Office of Educational Research, Baltimore County Schools, Towson, MD.