

## The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Score

Ever heard of the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score? It's a neat tool that you can find in MS Word. The Flesch-Kincaid measures the readability of text. The lower the score, the easier your written document is to understand.

Did you know that most people read at an 8<sup>th</sup> grade level? With the Flesch-Kincaid, you can quickly discover if your writing is above or below this point.

As a cataloger, you know the effect of writing clear, concise text (or not.) It's part of the equation of successful selling. But in your day-to-day writing, it's equally important.

Whether you're writing to staff members or a friend, you want to avoid ambiguity. If the recipient isn't clear on what you've said, mistakes may occur or feelings may get hurt. And then you've got a problem.

The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score is part of MS Word's readability statistics. To access them, click on **Tools** on the menu bar. From the dropdown menu, click on **Options** and then click on the **Spelling & Grammar** tab. Select the **Check grammar with spelling** checkbox and the **Show readability statistics** box, and then click **OK**.

Now, each time you run spell check, which you can do by clicking on the toolbar button that has ABC with a checkmark beneath it, Word will display the Readability Statistics dialog box. In the bottom Readability section, you'll see the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score.

The score reflects the grade level of your writing. (For example, a score of 8.0 means an average eighth grader could understand it.) Word calculates it based on the average number of syllables per word and the average number of words per sentence.

For business writing, you should aim for a score around 8.0. This is an accepted rule of thumb for many professional writers.

I think you'll notice a big difference in how your writing sounds as you lower the score. Reducing the score requires you to cut out unnecessary words, and fewer words means shorter sentences.

Good writing should be precise and to the point. The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score helps you whittle your writing so it's streamlined and easy-to-read.