



## The Indices of the Health Literacy Advisor

| Name of Index                     | What it Measures  | Type of Text to Evaluate   | Grade Index                        | What Matters!   | HLI Rating |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|------------------------------------|---|------------|
| Fry-Based Grade Level             | Average number of syllables per word & the average number of words per sentence, per 100 words paragraphs   | Running text in all paragraphs   | 1 <sup>st</sup> - college          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preferred by many health literacy experts for accuracy and flexibility to score running text short and long documents</li> <li>Assesses word syllables and sentences length</li> <li>Can scan wide range of grades from 1<sup>st</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup></li> <li>Not ideal for questionnaires, forms, or surveys</li> </ul> | ****<br>😊  |
| Gunning-Fog Index                 | Average sentence length & the number of words with more than two syllables for each 100 word paragraph  | Running text in all paragraphs   | 4 <sup>th</sup> - college          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not ideal for documents below 4<sup>th</sup> grade</li> <li>Not ideal for questionnaires, forms, or surveys</li> </ul>   | *<br>😊     |
| Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level        | Average number of syllables per word & the average number of words per sentence   | Running text in all paragraphs   | 5 <sup>th</sup> - college          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not ideal for documents below 5<sup>th</sup> grade</li> <li>Scores documents at 1.5 or up to 3 grades lower than the actual readability of the document</li> <li>Not ideal for questionnaires, forms, or surveys</li> </ul>  | *<br>😊     |
| Flesch Reading Ease               | Average number of syllables per word & the average number of words per sentence   | Running text in all paragraphs   | 4 <sup>th</sup> - college          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scores based on points 0-100, not grades. The HLA is the only tool that translates the points into grade levels for this index</li> <li>Not ideal for documents below 4<sup>th</sup> grade</li> <li>Not ideal for questionnaires, forms, or surveys</li> </ul>   | **<br>😊    |
| Precise SMOG index                | Words of three or more syllables in every 30 sentences  | All types of text including headings, bullets, lists, and running text in short paragraphs | 7 <sup>th</sup> - college          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The most accurate readability index</li> <li>Does not assess long sentences, only words</li> <li>Not ideal for documents below 7<sup>th</sup> grade</li> <li>Not ideal for documents with a lot of paragraphs of text</li> <li>Ideal for very easy-to-read documents</li> </ul>  | **         |
| Automated Readability Index (ARI) | Characters per word   | All types of text including headings, bullets, lists, and running text in short paragraphs | N/A                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The least accurate readability index</li> <li>Does not assess long sentences only words</li> <li>Not ideal for documents with a lot of paragraphs of text</li> <li>Ideal for very easy-to-read documents</li> </ul>  | *          |
| Coleman-Liau Index                | Average number of characters per words (instead of syllables per word) & sentence length in a 100 word paragraph  | Running text in all paragraphs   | 7 <sup>th</sup> - college          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not ideal for documents below 7<sup>th</sup> grade</li> <li>Not ideal for questionnaires, forms, or surveys</li> </ul>   | *<br>😊     |
| New Dale-Chall Formula            | Average sentence length & the number of unfamiliar words in the Dale-Chall Familiar Word List, a list that most American 4 <sup>th</sup> grade students could reliably understand | Running text in all paragraphs   | 5 <sup>th</sup> - 12 <sup>th</sup> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If words/terms are not in the Dale-Chall list, this index may ignore medical terms even if they are long and hard-to-read words</li> <li>Not ideal for documents below 5<sup>th</sup> grade and higher than 12th grade</li> <li>Not ideal for health questionnaires, forms, or surveys</li> </ul>                            | **<br>😊    |
| FORCAST Readability Formula       | Single syllables words  | All types of text including headings, bullets, lists, and running text in short paragraphs | 1 <sup>st</sup> - college          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not assess long sentences, only words</li> <li>Not ideal for documents with lots of paragraphs of text</li> <li>Ideal for questionnaires, forms, surveys and easy-to-read documents</li> </ul>  | **         |

### NOTES:

HLI Star Rating Scale: \*\*\*\* = highest rating, \* = lowest

😊 = If you are using this Health Literacy Advisor index to evaluate your documents, good news – you do NOT have to clean the document and remove bullets, headings and subheadings.