

The Ohio State University  
AHEC Clear Health Communication Program

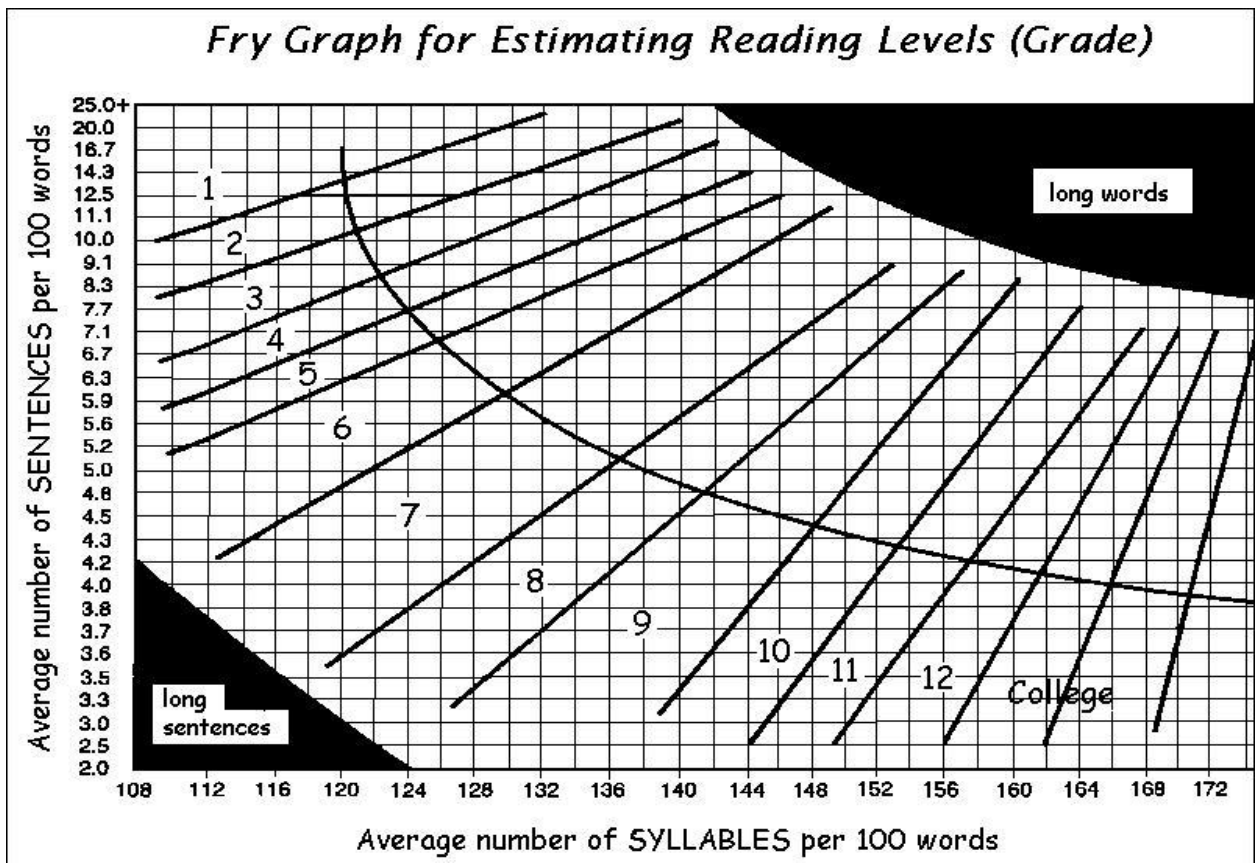


**Fry's Readability Graph: Directions for use**

Educators often would like to check the readability of a piece of writing. Edward Fry, formerly of the Rutgers University Reading Center, created one of the most widely used, and easy-to-use readability graphs for educators ( Fry, Edward. *Elementary Reading Instruction*. NY: McGraw Hill, 1977, p.217.)

**Directions for Use:**

- Randomly select 3 sample passages and count exactly 100 words beginning with the beginning of a sentence. Don't count numbers. Do count proper nouns. Count the number of sentences in the hundred words, estimating length of the fraction of the last sentence to the nearest 1/10th.
- Count the total number of syllables in the 100-word passage. An easy way is to simply put a hash mark above every syllable after the first syllable in each word, since you know there has to be at least 100 syllables in the passage. When you get to the end of the passage, count the number of marks and add 100.
- Mark the graph with the average sentence length and number of syllables. Place a dot where the two lines intersect. The area where the dot is plotted will give you the approximate grade level. If a great deal of variability is found, putting more sample counts into the average is desirable.



### Example 1:

#### First 100 words

An Institute of Medicine report says that medical mistakes are a serious problem in the health care system. (1) The IOM says that public awareness of the problem is an important step in making things better. (2) The “Speak Up” program is sponsored by The Joint Commission. (3) They agree that patients should be involved in their own health care. (4) These efforts to increase patient awareness and involvement are also supported by the Centers for Medicare & Medical Services. (5) This program gives simple advice on how you can help make health care a good experience. (6) Research shows that patients who take part in [decisions about their own health care are more likely to get better fast.] (8/21)

Syllables = 152  
Sentences = 6.4

#### Second 100 words

Ask a trusted family member or friend to be your advocate (advisor or supporter). (1) Your advocate can ask questions that you may not think about when you are stressed. (2) Ask this person to stay with you, even overnight, when you are hospitalized. (3) You will be able to rest better. (4) Your advocate can help make sure you get the right medicines and treatments. (5) Your advocate can also help remember the answers to questions you have asked. (6) He or she can speak up for you when you cannot speak up for yourself. (7) Make sure this person understands the kind of care you [want]. (10/11)

Syllables = 139  
Sentences = 8.9

#### Third 100 words

Participate in all decisions about your treatment. (1) You are the center of the health care team. (2) You and your doctor should agree on exactly what will be done during each step of your care. (3) Know who will be taking care of you. (4) Know how you should feel and how long the treatment should last. (5) Understand that more tests or medications may not always be better for you. (6) Ask your doctor how a new test or medication will help. (7) Keep copies of your medical records from previous hospital stays and share them with your health care team. (8) This will give them [better information about your health history.] 4/10

Syllables = 131  
Sentences = 8.4

	# of Sentences	# of Syllables
1 <sup>st</sup> 100 words	6.4	152
2 <sup>nd</sup> 100 words	8.9	139
3 <sup>rd</sup> 100 words	8.4	131
Totals	23.7	422
Divide totals by 3	7.9	140.6

Readability Level = 7<sup>th</sup> grade

