



Tips and tools
FOR THE WRITING WORLD

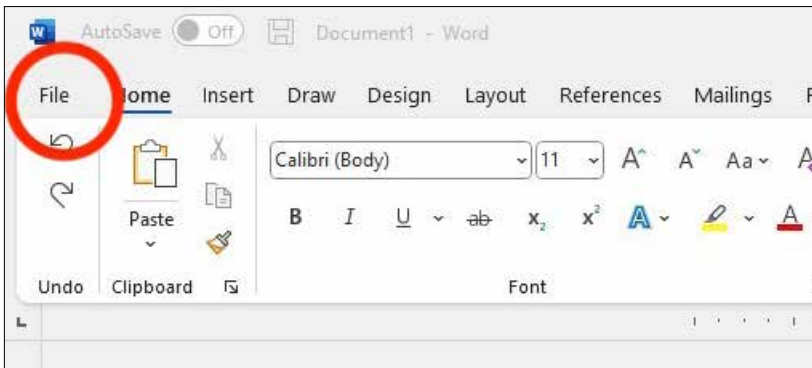
Measuring Readability Using Microsoft Word

Readable content is clear and easy to understand. One way to evaluate readability is to use the Flesch-Kincaid readability meter. The meter weighs a document and assigns it a grade level score. A higher grade level indicates that the content is harder to read; a lower grade level, that it's easier to read.

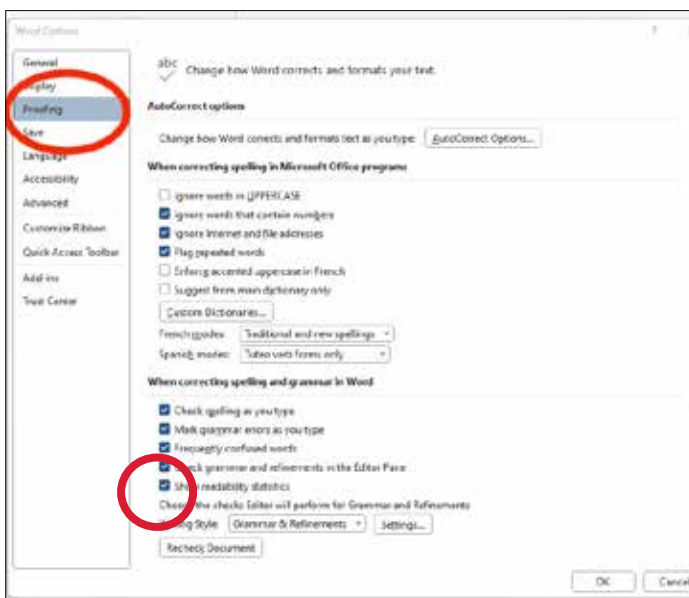
You can get a Flesch-Kincaid score for any document, directly in Microsoft Word. Here's how to do it.

First, enable the readability feature.

1. Open any Microsoft Word document.
2. Click **File**, then **Options**.

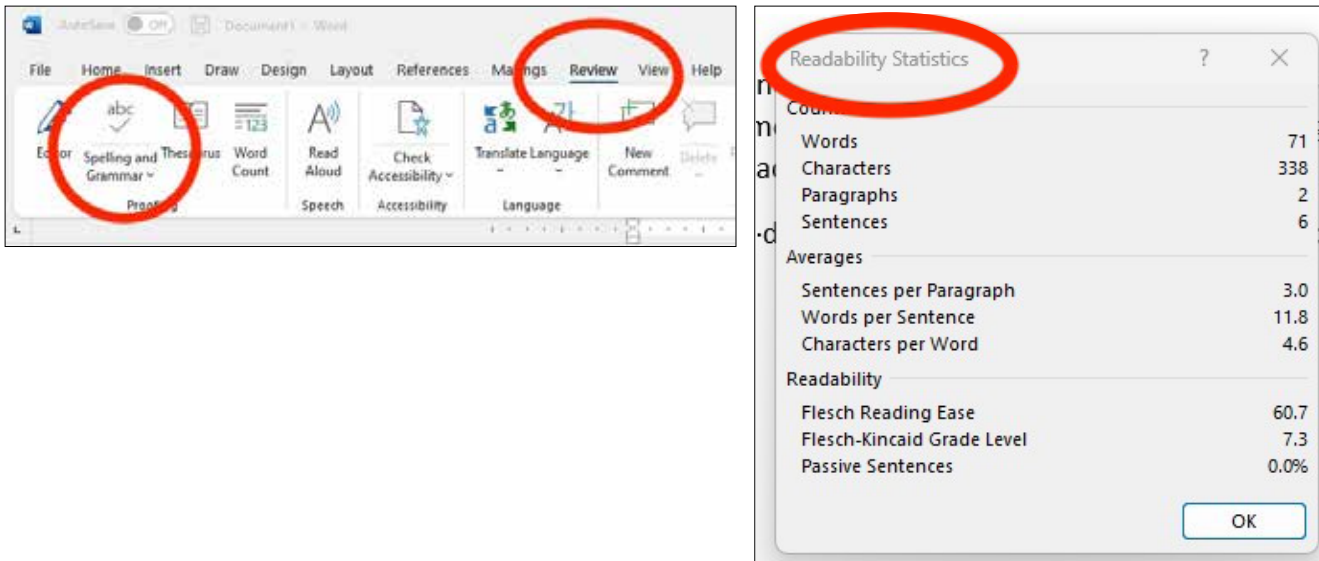


3. Click **Proofing**, then **Show Readability Statistics**. (Make sure that Check Grammar with Spelling is also clicked; otherwise, you won't be able to enable readability.)



Now, you're ready to check readability.

1. Click **Review**, then **Spelling & Grammar**.
2. Spellcheck will run. Once it's done, your readability statistics will pop up.



3. For most business documents, measure your success against these standards:
 - a. **Average sentences per paragraph = 4 or fewer**
 - b. **Average words per sentence = 14 or fewer**
 - c. **Flesh-Kincaid Grade Level = 7th to 9th grade level, or lower**
 - d. **Flesch Reading Ease = 60 or higher**
 - e. **Passive sentences = 25% or less**
4. Based on your readability scores, revise your document to use plain language wherever possible and to shorten words, sentences, and paragraphs. Check your metrics again and see if your scores have improved.

TIP: To check the readability of a *portion* of your document, highlight that portion and click Spelling & Grammar. Readability statistics will pop up for that portion.

