

APPENDIX H

How to Determine a Reading Comprehension Level for a Boating Safety Course Using the Gunning “FOG” Readability Test

The recommended reading level for a Boating Safety Course should be no higher than an 8th Grade or Age 13 reading level.

Using the boating course textbook, choose 3 samples of 100 words each. One sample should be near the beginning of the text, one in the middle, and one towards the end.

Headings and sub-headings are not considered sentences, so they are not used for word count, sentence count, or syllable count. In other words, ignore them.

Calculate the average sentence length in each sample. Do this by counting the number of words in each sentence and dividing by the number of sentences in each sample. Round answers to the nearest tenth. For formulaic purposes, we will call this number L for the average sentence length.

In each sample, count the number of words with 3 or more syllables (*see below). Find the average number of 3 or more syllable words per sample. Do this by dividing the number of 3 or more syllable words by 100 (the total number in the sample). Round answers to the nearest tenth. For formulaic purposes, we will call this number N for the average number of 3 or more syllable words.

$$\text{Grade Level} = (L + N) \times 0.4$$

The grade level for the sample is found by adding the average sentence length and the average number of 3 or more syllable words. Then, take the answer and multiply by 0.4

$$\text{Age Level} = [(L + N) \times 0.4] + 5$$

To find the Age Level of the reading passage, take the above grade level answer and add 5 to it since the average age of children starting school is 5 years of age.

*Information on finding 3 or more syllable words:

These words are best found by reading the passage out loud.

Some examples of syllable count are: another (3), area (3), passed (1), surface (2), surfaces (3), particle (3)

When reading numbers, symbols, or initials, count one syllable for each number or letter. Some examples are: 1998 = 4 syllables (1-9-9-8), 4.2 = 3 syllables (4-point-2), H2O = 3 syllables (H-2-O), USA = 3 syllables (U-S-A), Fig. 2 = 2 syllables (Fig-two)

When reading abbreviations (cm, mm, km, kg), the rule is to count each as just one syllable.

For more information on this and related topics, <http://www.timetabler.com/reading.html>