

How to Use the SMOG Reading Level Formula



To calculate the reading grade level using the SMOG formula, begin with the entire written work that is being assessed, and follow these four steps:

1. Count off 10 consecutive sentences near the beginning, in the middle, and near the end of the text.
2. From this sample of 30 sentences, circle all of the words containing three or more syllables (polysyllabic), including repetitions of the same word, and total the number of words circled.
3. Then simply use the following conversion table.

SMOG Conversion Table

Total Polysyllabic Word Counts	Approximate Grade Level (+ 1.5 Grades)
0-2	4
3-6	5
7-12	6
13-20	7
21-30	8
31-42	9
43-56	10
57-72	11
73-90	12
91-110	13
111-132	14
133-156	15
157-182	16
183-210	17
211-240	18

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The following guidelines will help clarify the above directions:

- A sentence is defined as a string of words punctuated with a period (.), an exclamation point (!) or a question mark (?).
- Hyphenated words are considered as one word.
 - For example, the word “non-profit” is considered one polysyllabic word.
- Numbers which are written out should also be considered, and if in numeric form in the text, they should be pronounced to determine if they are polysyllabic.
 - For example, “twenty-four” and “24” are considered one polysyllabic word.
- Proper nouns, if polysyllabic, should be counted, too.
 - For example, “Bakersfield” is a polysyllabic word.
- Abbreviations should be read as unabbreviated to determine if they are polysyllabic.
 - “Etc.” is polysyllabic. “Mr.” is not.