

# Readability and Plain English

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Poverty Law 1 - Fall 2023  
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# Why?

- Roughly 50% of native English-speaking Americans are unable to read at the 8th grade level, 20% are only functional literate

# Check Grade Level

1. <https://storytoolz.com/readability>
2. Microsoft Word -> Home tab -> Editor -> Document Stats

**Goal:** 5th to 6th grade reading level

[Sample Document](#)

# Improve Readability/Plain English

- Eliminating Unnecessary Words
- Choosing common, everyday words when possible
- Arranging words for clarity
- Preferring active voice
- Avoiding overly long sentences
- Using easy to read design techniques

Source: Plain English for Lawyers, R. Wydick & A. Sloan (6th Edition)

# Resources

- [Readability Checklist](#), Minnesota State Support
- [www.writeclearly.org](http://www.writeclearly.org)
- [www.plainlanguage.gov](http://www.plainlanguage.gov)
- Mass Legal Services:  
<https://www.masslegalservices.org/library/directory/language-access/plain-language-readability>
- [Plain English Campaign: The A to Z Alternative Words](#), 201
- [Plain Language Guide](#), National Association for Court Management (Jan. 7, 2019)
- [The Dale-Chall Word List](#): commonly known 4th grade words.