

Readability Score

The reading ease and score within Course Creator are calculated using [Flesch-Kincaid](#), and the sentence difficulty is calculated using 6 algorithms. Higher scores indicate material that is easier to read; lower numbers mark passages that are more difficult to read.

- We recommend a readability score of 60 or above on the Flesch-Kincaid test. This is based on a general interest course and a global cohort including many non-native English speakers.
- We recognise that the target score will vary depending on your subject and intended audience.
- We would expect many professional-level healthcare courses to have a lower readability score, given the prevalence of multisyllabic healthcare vocabulary. Similarly, a philosophy course might include passages of relatively long sentences, where the ideas cannot be communicated in the same way in shorter sentences (or where shorter sentences might change the meaning).

Summary: The 'recommended' score is 60, context matters.

How is Sentence Difficulty Calculated?

Six algorithms are used to identify sentences that are difficult or very difficult to read.

The article (the markdown) is converted into HTML. The text content of each element is analysed (e.g. paragraph tag), running this against the six different readability algorithms. The target reading age is set to 16 and we ignore sentences with less than five words.

- If text fails 4 algorithms, we highlight it as difficult to read.
- If text fails 5 algorithms, we highlight it as very difficult to read.

Example Article Step with Readability Tool in Use

 Edit  Preview

Article content *

We recommend that FutureLearn steps should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete, including reading time, comprehension, and interaction in discussion. Please bear this in mind when writing an article step. [See guidelines for formatting article text.](#)

[Edit article](#) [Check readability](#)

0 difficult to read sentences.
2 very difficult to read sentences.

Reading ease: Fairly difficult to read | Score: 51.01 (we recommend 60 or above)

[How did we calculate this?](#)

Hello!

In this week, I'm going to try and at least introduce some of the big and (hopefully) interesting issues in the pedagogy & learning sciences. As a field, it is far too wide to be able to cover everything even in summary, bridging psychology, philosophy, technology, sociology, epistemology, and endless other disciplines. Educationalists tend to have specific interests ranging from the niche to the wide-ranging. Professor Mike Sharples (our Academic Lead) is interested in mobile/contextual learning, citizen science and inquiry learning, while I'm more interested in how learning can be effective at scale and how we can help teachers develop in meaningful ways.

Chart Outlining Readability Scores

How to use this chart

Draw a straight line from your measured 'words per sentence' to your measured 'syllables per word'. The intersection of this line with the centre column shows your readability score. The minimum score for Plain English is 60.

