

HIAS OPEN RESOURCE

# How to work out readability of a text

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# Overview

## **This document contains...**

Slides that could be used as part of a CPD sequence for teachers in school, supporting understanding of reading in secondary schools

## **Points to consider when using this resource**

The resources in this series are intended as a companion piece to the DfE's series of training videos and guidance [\*Supporting all readers in secondary school\*](#), providing additional detail. This resource expands on ideas shared in video 4, [\*Choosing curriculum texts\*](#) and provides links to research.

# Readability

- There are plenty of readability checkers online – copy and paste text into the box and compare the readability outcomes of a number of tests
- Readability is also individual – use your knowledge of the students to inform your thinking:
  - What do they struggle with in particular?
  - What vocabulary will they need to know in order to read the text?
  - What concepts and content do they need to be familiar with?
  - What have they studied before?
  - How familiar are they with the text type?

## Reading reckoner - task

- Choose approximately 100 words of a text from your subject
- Hold a particular pupil in your mind as you read it
- Highlight or underline these key things you think that pupil might find difficult
  - Unfamiliar words
  - Figurative language, figures of speech or complex grammatical structures
  - References that require background knowledge or tricky concepts

## Mental arithmetic around readability

Within 100 words (or so)

- **0-2 issues:** independent reading; too easy for class
- **3-4 issues:** some challenge; just right for moving students on in reading when reading independently
- **5 issues:** appropriately challenging; the sweet spot for classroom reading
- **6-10 issues:** challenging; requires explicit focus on active reading for comprehension
- **10-20 issues:** too hard, unless reading with understanding is the main and only initial goal

## Strategies for making a text more readable

Consider:

- Providing a glossary
- Pre-teaching vocabulary
- Pre-teaching or revising relevant background knowledge
- Linking to experiences or visual/film imagery
- Using fluency strategies to ensure that the text can be read aloud accurately
- Repeated reading
- Goal setting and monitoring

## HIAS English Team

Please contact Joanna Kenyon [Joanna.Kenyon@hants.gov.uk](mailto:Joanna.Kenyon@hants.gov.uk) for support with secondary reading, whole school literacy and English.

For further details on the full range of services available please contact us using the following email: [htlcdev@hants.gov.uk](mailto:htlcdev@hants.gov.uk)

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