# How to assess the reading level of text using Microsoft Word

If you have a version of Microsoft Word for Windows, you can use it to determine the readability level of text. The following instructions are for Word 2000. Other versions should work in a very similar way.

First, click on "Tools" at the top of your screen. Then, click on "Options…" Toggle to the "Spelling and Grammar" tab. Your screen should look like the one below. Under the "Grammar" heading, make sure your settings are like these:

Your settings should look like this.
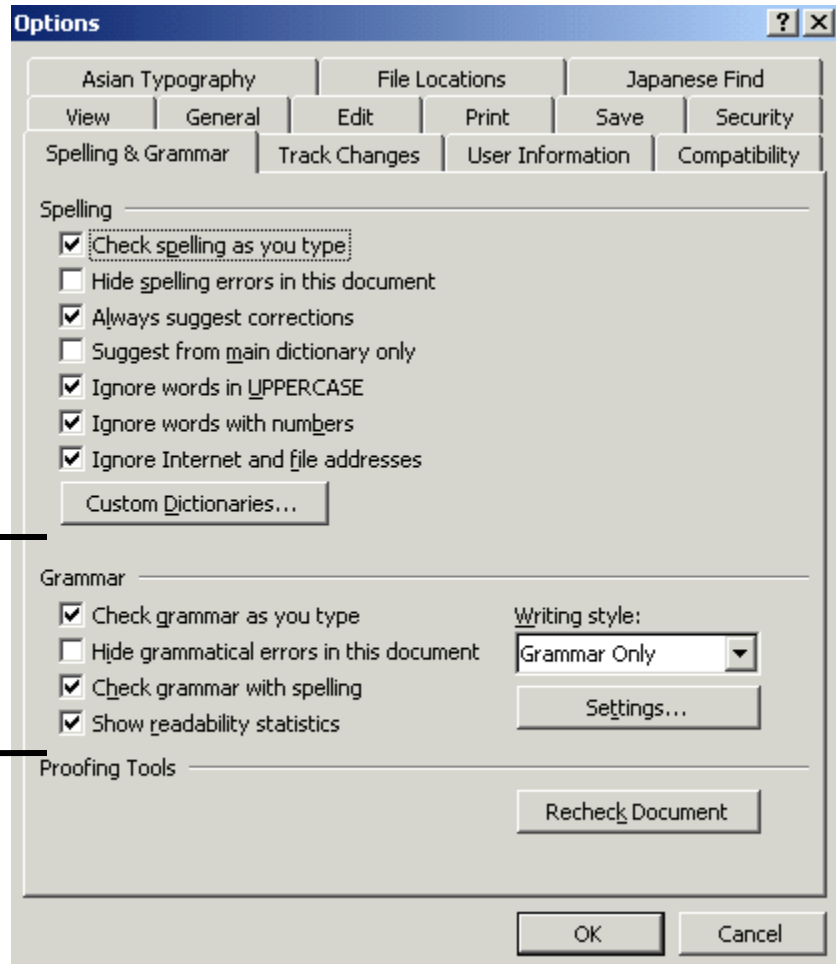
With the "Show readability statistics" option checked, you will get a report whenever you go through a spell check. To run a spell check, click on "Tools" and choose "Spelling and Grammar…" or, hit the F7 key.

Below is an image of what this report will look like:

For this assignment, the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level should be approximately **6**.

More info on the Readability Statistics (from the Word Help file):

When Microsoft Word finishes checking spelling and grammar, it can display information about the reading level of the document, including the following readability scores. Each readability score bases its rating on the average number of syllables per word and words per sentence.

- **Flesch Reading Ease Score:**

  Rates text on a 100-point scale; the higher the score, the easier it is to understand the document. For most standard documents, aim for a score of approximately 60 to 70.

  The formula for the Flesch Reading Ease score is:

  $206.835 - (1.015 \times ASL) - (84.6 \times ASW)$

  where:

  ASL = average sentence length (the number of words divided by the number of sentences)

  ASW = average number of syllables per word (the number of syllables divided by the number of words)

- **Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level:**

  Rates text on a U.S. school grade level. For example, a score of 8.0 means that an eighth grader can understand the document. For most documents, aim for a score of approximately 7.0 to 8.0.

  The formula for the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score is:

  $(.39 \times ASL) + (11.8 \times ASW) - 15.59$