

# \*Dale-Chall Readability Index Computation Sheet

Refer to Dale & Chall (1948) for a more detailed account of these readability procedures

Directions: Select a text sample of 100-150 words from an intermediate or advanced level text (grades 5-college). Complete the steps below to compute a readability index.

1. Count the *total number* of words in the reading sample.

Total Number of Words = \_\_\_\_\_

2. Count the *number of sentences* in the reading sample.

Number of Sentences = \_\_\_\_\_

3. Compute the *average sentence length* by dividing the number of words (item 1) by the number of sentences (item 2):

$$\boxed{\phantom{000}} \div \boxed{\phantom{000}} = \boxed{\phantom{000}}$$

Number of Words                      Number of Sentences                      Avg. Sentence Length

4. \*Count up the number of words in the sample that are *not* found on the Dale Word List ('*difficult words*'). Count each difficult word each time that it appears:

Number of Difficult Words = \_\_\_\_\_

5. Compute *percentage of difficult words* by dividing the number of difficult words (item 4) by the total number of words in the sample (item 1) and then multiplying by 100:

$$\left( \boxed{\phantom{000}} \div \boxed{\phantom{000}} \right) * 100 = \boxed{\phantom{000}}$$

Number of Difficult Words      Total Number of Words                      Percentage of Difficult Words

6. Plug values from items 3 & 5 into this formula to compute Dale-Chall Readability Index:

**Dale-Chall Readability Index:** (0.0496 \* \_\_\_\_\_ Avg. Sentence Length) +

(0.1579 \* \_\_\_\_\_ Percent Difficult Words) + 3.6365 = \_\_\_\_\_ Raw Score

## Dale-Chall Raw Score to Grade Conversion Table:

Formula	Corrected	Formula	Corrected
Raw Score	Grade Levels	Raw Score	Grade Levels
4.9 and below	----4 <sup>th</sup> Grade and Below	8.0 to 8.9	-----11-12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
5.0 to 5.9	-----5-6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	9.0 to 9.9	-----13-15 <sup>th</sup> Grade (College)
6.0 to 6.9	-----7-8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10.0 and above	----16-(College Graduate)
7.0 to 7.9	-----9-10 <sup>th</sup> Grade		

Dale, E., & Chall, J.S. (1948). A formula for predicting readability. *Educational Research Bulletin*, 27, 37-53.

\*General Guidelines for identifying 'Difficult Words' in the Dale-Chall Readability Formula (Refer to Dale & Chall (1948) for a more detailed account of these readability procedures):

**Familiar Words.** Count the following as familiar or 'known' words:

- Words appearing on the Dale Familiar Word List (and their abbreviations—e.g., "U.S." for "United States").
- The names of people and places (whether or not they appear on the list).
- Plural and possessive endings of nouns from Dale Familiar Word List
- Variants of words from the Dale Familiar Word List that have these verb form endings: *-s, -ies, -ing, -n, -ed, -ied*).
- Adjectives formed by adding *-n* to a proper noun (e.g., *American*).
- Variants of words from the Dale Familiar Word List that have these adverbial, comparative, or superlative endings added: *-ly, -er, -ier, -est, -iest*.
- Hyphenated words (if *each* element of the hyphenated word appears separately on the Dale Familiar Word List).
- Numbers appearing in digit form (e.g., "42", "34,993").

**Unfamiliar ('Difficult') Words.** Difficult words (those not on the Dale Familiar Word List) are counted as often as they appear in the text. (The word *tornado*, for example, does not appear on the Dale List. If *tornado* appeared 5 times in a text sample, it would be counted as 5 difficult words.)

Count the following as unfamiliar or 'unknown' words:

- Words *not* appearing on the Dale Familiar Word List (other than the names of people and places).
- Irregular noun plurals, even if the singular form appears on the Dale Familiar Word List (e.g., *oxen* would be counted as difficult, even though *ox* appears on the list).
- Nouns formed by adding *-er* or *-r* to a word on the list (unless that *-er* or *-r* term itself appears on the list).
- Variants of words from the Dale Familiar Word List that have irregular verb form endings—unless those variant forms also appear on the Dale List.
- Words from the Dale List that have two or more endings added (e.g., *clip+(p)ing+s*).