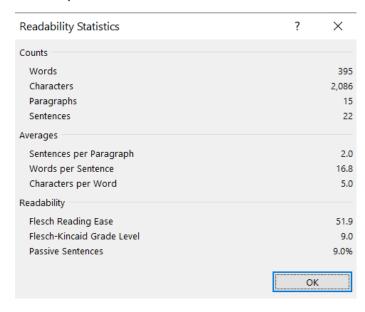**THE Writing CENTER, INC.**

How to Set Up Readability Statistics in Microsoft Word

Setting up in Microsoft Word

1. Open **Microsoft Word**, and select the **File** tab.
2. At the bottom of the panel, select **Options**, then on the **Options** screen, **Proofing**.
3. In the list of options, under "**When correcting spelling and grammar in Word**," select "**Show Readability Statistics**, and at the bottom right of the screen, click **OK**.
4. The next time you use the computer **Editor's Spelling & Grammar Check** on a Word document, after you accept or ignore the **Editor's** suggested corrections, the last screen will display your **Readability Statistics**.

Checking a Document's Readability Statistics

1. Open your document in **Microsoft Word**, select the **Review** tab, and then **Editor**.
2. Complete the **Editor's Spelling & Grammar Check**, accepting or ignoring suggested corrections. Your **Readability Statistics** will display in a separate screen.
3. Interpret the scores as follows:

Readability Statistics	? ✕
Counts	
Words	395
Characters	2,086
Paragraphs	15
Sentences	22
Averages	
Sentences per Paragraph	2.0
Words per Sentence	16.8
Characters per Word	5.0
Readability	
Flesch Reading Ease	51.9
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	9.0
Passive Sentences	9.0%
	OK

The **Flesch Reading Ease** score is on a scale of 1 to 100, with 100 being the most readable. The score is based on an evaluation of the average number of syllables per word and words per sentence. A score in the range of 60 to 70 is considered a good score for business communication and Plain English. The use of passive voice, technical terms, and complex sentence structure all affect reading ease.

The **Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level** score, on a scale of 1 to 12, is also based on an evaluation of the average number of syllables per word and of words per sentence. A person's effective or comfortable reading level is not necessarily the same as their education/grade level. Thus, a score in the range of 6 to 8 for business communication (10 to 12 for technical communication) is a good score.

The **Passive Sentences** score reminds you to consider the appropriateness of your use of passive voice. For example, active voice is the default voice for business documents. But passive voice, used for a less direct style when communicating a negative message, improves tone. Technical reports, with their focus on completed action, may use passive voice, depending on your organization's or client's preferred style.

NOTE: Additional factors, such as the accessibility of content, contribute to a document's readability. **Accessibility** is increased by clear, concise wording; clear topic sentences; consistent numbering and format; informative graphics; predictive headings and subheadings; indented lists; short paragraphs; transitional words; and white space.