**Tips for Writing Low Literacy**

**Informed Consent Forms**

1. Keep writing style simple.
2. Use active voice and conversational style.
3. Sequence main points in a logical manner.
4. Make your sub-points clearly correspond to the main point.
5. Use short words and sentences.
6. Avoid double negative expressions.
7. Use the same word consistently rather than synonyms to avoid confusion.
8. Write short summaries at the end of long sections.
9. Use age appropriate illustrations. This can apply to children or mentally challenged individuals.
10. As appropriate, place illustrations close to the related text to better explain procedures or concepts.
11. Evaluation of Reading Level in Word 2007:

\* Click on “Spelling and Grammar”. \* Click on “Options” \* Under “When correcting spelling and grammar in Word” select the “Show readability statistics” box.  
\* When Microsoft® Word finishes checking spelling and grammar; it displays the Flesch-Kincaid reading level of the document.

1. Test the reading level of your informed consent.

**Testing the Reading Level of Your Informed Consent Form**

There are several tests that measure reading level. The Fog Index, developed by Robert Gunning, is easy to understand and requires a minimum amount of text to execute the test. To find the Fog Index of material you have written, follow these steps.

1. Take a sample of approximately 100 words of the content of the Informed Consent, stopping at the end of the sentence nearest to a 100-word count. Thus, the sample could run from somewhere in the 90's to 104 or so words. **Omit** from this count headings and subheadings.

Number of words in the passage: \_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Count the number of sentences in the sample: \_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Get the average number of words per sentence by dividing the number of words in the sample by the number of sentences in the sample: \_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Count the number of polysyllabic words (words with three or more syllables) in the sample. These are considered to be hard words. Count each hard word only the first time it appears in the sample.

**Omit** from this count proper nouns and easy compound words. **Also omit** from this count any three-syllable words made up of a two-syllable word and one of the following endings: -s, -es, -'s, -ed, -er, -ing, -est, or -ly.

**Do count** as a hard word any two-syllable words made up of a two-syllable word and one of the following endings: -or, -ier, -iest, or -ily.

Number of hard words: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Add the average number of words per sentence (#3) to the number of hard words (#4): \_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Multiply this sum by .4: \_\_\_\_ **Approximate Grade Level of Your Material**: \_\_\_\_\_\_

Example:

**What Is The Purpose Of This Research Study?** *“This research study is about canine teeth that are not erupted and to learn about the ways to uncover these teeth.  The purpose of this research study is to compare two surgeries for uncovering these canine teeth along with braces to pull the tooth to the correct position. In one way, the canine tooth is uncovered and the gum tissue overlying it is not put back into place.  The tooth is left uncovered with a brace attached.  This is called open eruption.  In the other way, the gum is opened and a brace is attached and the gum is put back.  This is called closed eruption. This study is being done to see if there is a difference in how the gum responds to these two ways of uncovering the tooth.  Please see the last page of this consent form to see pictures of these two ways.”*

1. Take a sample of approximately 100 words of the content of the Informed Consent, stopping at the end of the sentence nearest to a 100-word count. Thus, the sample could run from somewhere in the 90's to 104 or so words. **Omit** from this count headings and subheadings.

Number of words in the passage: \_100\_\_\_\_\_

1. Count the number of sentences in the sample: \_\_\_6\_\_\_
2. Get the average number of words per sentence by dividing the number of words in the sample by the number of sentences in the sample: \_\_16\_\_\_\_
3. Count the number of polysyllabic words (words with three or more syllables) in the sample. These are considered to be hard words. Count each hard word only the first time it appears in the sample.

**Omit** from this count proper nouns and easy compound words. **Also omit** from this count any three-syllable words made up of a two-syllable word and one of the following endings: -s, -es, -'s, -ed, -er, -ing, -est, or -ly. **Do count** as a hard word any two-syllable words made up of a two-syllable word and one of the following endings: -or, -ier, -iest, or -ily.

Number of hard words: \_\_3\_\_ (e.g., surgeries, position, eruption)\_\_\_\_

1. Add the average number of words per sentence (#3) to the number of hard words (#4): \_16 + 3 = 19\_\_\_\_\_
2. Multiply this sum by .4: \_\_19 x .4 = \_\_7.6\_\_
3. **Approximate Grade Level of Your Material**: \_\_\_**7.6** \_\_\_