

# Raygor Readability Estimate

*Running Out of Time*, Margaret Peterson Haddix, New York, NY, Aladdin Paperbacks, 1999.

*Purpose of the Strategy.* Devised by Alton Raygor (1977), this readability formula is designed specifically as a measure of sentence complexity and word length for middle/secondary level reading material. Easier to use than formulas like the Fry Readability Graph (1977) which include syllable counts, the formula is an estimate and the following cautions and limitations should be considered:

1. Student's prior knowledge or background experience
2. Conceptual load—how complex the concepts are
3. Student interest in the material
4. Students' linguistic experience with the syntax
5. Students' maturity level and readiness for the material

## DIRECTIONS.

1. The Raygor is a lot simpler than it seems at first glance. First, count out three 100-word passages, from the beginning, middle, and end of a book. The results of the Raygor will be averaged out over the three passages. A quick count can be conducted on one passage, but is not guaranteed to be as accurate. Do not count numerals unless written out—i.e., do not count “43” but do count, “forty-three” as one word.
2. Count how many sentences you have. If the final sentence is broken within the 100-word limit, estimate that sentence to nearest tenth. For example, seven (7) words out of a 15-word sentence would round out to .5.
3. Now take the 100-word passage and underline words with six (6) letters or more. Count how many words are in the passage.
4. To plot the results on the graph, find the total number of sentences in your passage on the vertical axis (left column) on the Raygor scale and place a dot on the margin closest to that number. Next, find the number of words having six (6) or more letters and place a dot on the horizontal axis closest to your number. Find the intersection of the two dots on the graph to arrive at your grade level. Remember that grade level is only valid within the “parallel” lines. If your intersection point is outside of the lines your total is invalid for the purpose of this estimate.

*Example:*

	Sentences	Words
Passage A	6.0	15
Passage B	6.8	19
Passage C	6.4	17
Total	19.2	51
Average	6.4	17

This gives you a readability of about 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

Passage 1: Page 3.

They passed the school, the general store, and Dr. Fister's clapboard house. Jessie couldn't understand how the doctor could afford a clapboard house, when no one went to him. Jessie's pa was the blacksmith, and he was always busy. Yet Jessie's family still lived in the log cabin they'd built back in 1828, when they first came to Clifton. Jessie had hinted more than once that they needed a new house, now that there were six children. After all, she said, little Katie was soon going to outgrow the trundle bed that slipped under Ma and Pa's bed downstairs. Where / was Katie going to sleep then?

Passage 2: Page 92.

At the back were some strips of paper. These had to be money, Jessie decided. She hoped it was still good. With so many banks failing, Mr. Seward was getting finicky about what money he would accept at the store. Most people in Clifton used coins or barter anyway. But Jessie might need to find someone to accept these bills outside Clifton....Jessie pulled out one of the bills that said, "20" on every end. It didn't have a bank name on it, only "Federal Reserve Note, The United States of America." And –a picture of Andrew Jackson! Jessie forgot her / worries over whether the money was any good or not.

Passage 3: Page 182.

For tomorrow, the Keyser children would all be going to a modern school outside Clifton. They'd ride one of those bog yellow vehicles Jessie had seen all those months ago—she knew now that they were called school buses, not limousines. Jessie and the others would learn about all the twentieth-century things they'd missed all these years. They'd even do some of their worked on something called a computer. Jessie let got of the calico. All the others were excited about going to school and "being modern." Hannah had discovered makeup and marveled at how red she could maker her lips / and cheeks without pinching them.

	Sentences	Words
Passage 1	6.2	25
Passage 2	9.3	27
Passage 3	6.7	35
Total	22.2	87
Average	7.4	29

This gives us a readability of about seventh grade for *Running Out of Time*.

