The regulations state that the consent shall be *in language* understandable to the subject. This goes beyond having the consent document just in *the language* understandable to subject (English, Spanish, etc.). To enhance understandability and readability, the consent should be written in active voice, and avoid grammatical and typographical errors.

Federal guidance recommends, in order to maintain consent language simple (layman terms), the consent should *not be written* beyond a 9th grade reading level.

Flesch-Kincaid, a feature offered by Microsoft Word, helps estimate the grade level of a document (e.g. consent form). The following is a step-by-step process of how to access and use the Flesch-Kincaid feature.

*Instructions for Microsoft Word 2003*

*Instructions for Microsoft Word 2007*

**MS Word 2003:**

**STEP 1 & 2:**

1. Go to “Tools”

2. Scroll to the bottom and click on “Options”
Instructions for Flesch-Kincaid (Reading Level Statistics)

3. In the “Option” window, click on the “Spelling & Grammar” tab

**STEP 3:**

4. Once in the “Spelling & Grammar” tab, scroll down to the “Grammar” section

**STEP 4, 5 & 6:**

5. Then, check off “Show readability statistics”

6. Click “Ok”
7. Now you should be able to check the reading level of your document by going to “Tools” and “Spelling and Grammar”.

STEP 7:

STEP 8:

8. Once spell and grammar check is complete, the “Readability Statistics” window will appear. The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level will appear at the bottom under “Readability”. In this example, the readability score is 7.6. Therefore, the reading level is approximately at a 7th-8th grade level.
MS Word 2007:

**STEP 1:**

1. For MS Word 2007, click on the “Review” Ribbon.
STEP 2 & 3:

2. Click “Spelling & Grammar”

3. Under the “Spelling and Grammar” feature, click “Options”
STEP 4 & 5:

4. Make sure “Show readability Statistics” is checked.

5. Click “Ok”
Once spell and grammar check is complete, the "Readability Statistics" window will appear. The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level will appear at the bottom under "Readability". In this example, the readability score is 8.0. Therefore, the reading level is approximately at an 8th grade level.
For additional assistance use Microsoft Help Desk