Plain Language Overview and Analysis

An assessment of 13 College of Liberal Arts department pages

Prepared for

CLA Web Champions Group

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Section I
Introduction to the Analysis

Introduction
The purpose of this analysis is to evaluate and analyze the readability of the College of Liberal Arts' (CLA) departmental websites with plain language guidelines in mind. Plain language, according to the Plain Writing Act of 2010 is "writing that is clear, concise, well-organized, and follows other best practices appropriate to the subject or field and intended audience" ("What is plain language?", n.d.). In other words, writing should be written with a specific audience in mind and as simply as possible so that readers are able to understand the information the first time they encounter it.

The W3C in their Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) offer success criterion for meeting appropriate reading level on the web. To meet WCAG 2.0 standards, W3C recommends reducing complexity by using simple sentence forms (subject-verb-object), shortening sentence and word lengths, reducing the use of conjunctions, avoiding professional jargon, and replacing longer, unfamiliar words with shorter, common ones, among other strategies.

W3C suggests that "readability of content may […] be determined by applying a readability formula to the selected passage" ("Understanding Success Criterion", n.d.). Readability formulas are designed to calculate such metrics as number of words in a passage, length of words, character count, syllable count, and comprehension difficulty. These formulas generate numeric or grade level values which "can then be interpreted using the education levels described in the Internal Standard Classification of Education" ("Understanding Success Criterion", n.d.).

Statement of the Problem
This report assesses 13 CLA departmental webpages for readability. Values are determined through use of three readability formulas (the Flesch Reading Ease formula, the Gunning Fog Index, and the Automated Readability Index) and the results are discussed in detail.

The report culminates in several key recommendations for meeting WCAG accessibility standards as the College moves forward with site overhaul and redesign, and includes a sample of rewritten text as demonstration of said standards in use. The report concludes with a set of methodologies that may be used to standardize and ensure the readability of all future CLA web content.

Significance of the Analysis
According to plainlanguage.gov, though qualifications for plain language vary from reader to reader, written material is considered plain when the audience is able to "find what they need, understand what they find, and use what they find to meet their needs" ("Federal plain language guidelines", n.d.). In the case of the CLA homepage and CLA departmental pages,

information is geared towards prospective students. Thus, we can expect that user needs are met when they leave each webpage with a clear and accurate understanding of what the College offers.

To reach as many users as possible, one must consider the range of site visitors' educational and cultural backgrounds (as of this report's production, in the last twelve months, CLA site visitors came from all but three countries in the entire world), and any potential learning or reading disabilities. The use of plain language ensures that text is readable for a broader audience; the more people that are able to understand the content on CLA pages, the more potential applicants and enrollments.

Scope of the Analysis

This report includes the analysis of 13 different webpages, pulled from eleven of the College of Liberal Arts' 13 departments and one school. The list of these departments and school and the URL of each tested webpage is listed in Table 1.

Table 1. List of departments and webpages used to evaluate readability

Department/School – Program	Webpage URL
Art & Art History – B.A. in Studio Art	https://cla.auburn.edu/art/programs/ba-in-studio-art/
Music – Overview	https://cla.auburn.edu/music/prospective-students/programs-of-study/
Theatre – B.F.A in Performance	https://cla.auburn.edu/theatre/academics/bfa-performance-music-theatre/
English – B.A. in Literature	https://cla.auburn.edu/english/literature/
Foreign Languages & Literatures – Overview	https://cla.auburn.edu/forlang/
Philosophy – Overview	https://cla.auburn.edu/philosophy/
Communication & Journalism – Overview	https://cla.auburn.edu/cmjn/communication/
Aviation – Overview	https://cla.auburn.edu/aviation/
Political Science – Overview	https://cla.auburn.edu/polisci/undergraduate-programs/political-science/about-political-science/
Psychology – B.A. in Psychology	https://cla.auburn.edu/psychology/welcome-to-the-department-of-psychology/the-psychology-major/
Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work – Sociology Overview	https://cla.auburn.edu/sociology/sociology-program/

| Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work – Anthropology Overview | https://cla.auburn.edu/sociology/anthropology/ |
| Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work – Social Work Overview | https://cla.auburn.edu/sociology/social-work/ |

The Economics, Communication Disorders, and History departments are not represented in this analysis, as their "About" pages did not meet the necessary word count (for more details, see section labeled "Evaluation Methods" below).

Evaluation Methods

All webpages (see Appendix A) were chosen using the same criterion:

- Webpage must be geared towards prospective students
- Webpage must be about a program or specific degree within a program
- Webpage content must be between 100 and 200 words

Pages geared towards prospective students were deemed most valuable for analysis as they fit the primary purpose of the CLA department and program pages (to advertise). Additionally, as required by most readability tests, page content needed to equal or exceed 100 total words. Thus, the Economics, Communication Disorders, and History departments were excluded from the analysis as they did not meet the necessary count.

Each webpage's content was evaluated using three readability formulas (the Flesch Reading Ease formula, the Gunning Fog Index, and the Automated Readability Index – all detailed below) and consensus scores which were calculated using the aforementioned formulas in addition to four others (Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score, the Coleman-Liau Index, the SMOG index, and the Linsear Write Formula). The website "Readability Formulas" (http://www.readabilityformulas.com/free-readability-formula-tests.php) was used to conduct all testing.

The first of these tests, the Flesch Reading Ease formula, uses word and sentence length, and total syllables to determine readability (see Figure 1).

$$206.835 - 1.015 \left(\frac{\text{total words}}{\text{total sentences}} \right) - 84.6 \left(\frac{\text{total syllables}}{\text{total words}} \right)$$

Figure 1. Flesch Reading Ease formula

Results of the Flesch Reading Ease formula are generated in the form of a readability score between 0-100 (where a higher number equals greater readability). To achieve plain language standards, or reading level between 7th-9th grade ("Understanding Success Criterion", n.d.), a

Flesch Reading Ease score must fall between 60-70. Table 2 lists Flesch Reading Ease score ranges and their corresponding grade levels.

Table 2. List of Flesch Reading Ease scores and corresponding grade levels

Score	Grade Level
100.0-90.0	5th grade
90.0-80.0	6th grade
80.0-70.0	7th grade
70.0-60.0	8th – 9th grade
60.0-50.0	10th – 11th grade
50.0-30.0	College
30.0-0.0	College graduate

The second of these tests, the Gunning Fog Index (GFI), measures the overall difficulty of a passage by determining the number of complex words (greater or equal to three syllables) and their ratio to average sentence length (see Figure 2).

$$0.4 \left[\left(\frac{\text{words}}{\text{sentences}} \right) + 100 \left(\frac{\text{complex words}}{\text{words}} \right) \right]$$

Figure 2. Gunning Fog Index formula

GFI scores directly correspond to grade levels so that a score of seven equates to seventh grade, 13 equates to college freshman, and so on. For a piece of text to achieve near-universal understanding on the GFI, it needs an index score of less than eight. Table 3 lists GFI score ranges and their corresponding grade levels.

Table 3. List of Gunning Fog Index scores and corresponding grade levels

Score	Grade Level
17+	College graduate
16	College senior
15	College junior
14	College sophomore
13	College freshman
12	12th grade
11	11th grade
10	10th grade
9	9th grade
8	8th grade
7	7th grade
6	6th grade

The third of these tests, the Automated Readability Index (ARI), determines the understandability of a text by determining the number of complex words (see Figure 3).

$$4.71 \left(\frac{\text{characters}}{\text{words}} \right) + 0.5 \left(\frac{\text{words}}{\text{sentences}} \right) - 21.43$$

Figure 3. Automated Readability Index formula

Unlike the GFI which takes syllables per word into account, the ARI considers the total number of characters per word. Like the Flesch Reading Ease score and GFI, the ARI produces a score used to estimate the grade and age levels necessary to understand a piece of text. For a piece of text to achieve near-universal understanding on the ARI, it needs an index score of less than eight. Table 4 lists ARI score ranges and their corresponding grade levels.

Table 4. List of Automatic Readability Index scores and corresponding grade levels

Score	Grade Level
14+	Professor
13	College student
12	12th grade
11	11th grade
10	10th grade
9	9th grade
8	8th grade
7	7th grade
6	6th grade
5	5th grade
4	4th grade
3	3rd grade
2	1st-2nd grade
1	Kindergarten

In addition to the three individual tests, consensus scores were composited from a total of seven tests. Consensus score results appear as grade level, reading level (easy to read, difficult to read, very difficult to read, etc.), and reader's age.

For test result accuracy, each text sample was prepared prior to testing. For example, according to the W3C, "titles [should be] removed or ignored for the analysis because changing the words in titles might make the titles easier to read but would make it impossible to understand the item to which the title refers" ("Understanding Success Criterion", n.d.). Thus, all program/department names were removed for the sake of testing (e.g. "anthropology" and "anthropological," "music" and "musical" were removed from the

Anthropology and Music program pages respectively). For each sample, the removal of titles improved overall readability and had no negative effect on the findings.

Additionally, according to the U.S. Department of Health's "Using readability formulas: A cautionary note," text samples should be free of any embedded terminal punctuation (e.g. the period in the abbreviated Dr. should be removed) and titles, headings, and bulleted lists, as to not mislead the computer. All text samples used in this analysis were prepared with these guidelines in mind.

Limitations of the Analysis

Readability tests, while able to detect the difficulty of words and sentences (through syllable, character, and word count), cannot, alone, serve as sufficient writing guides as they fail to assess reading comprehension, reading ease, or usability of a piece of text. More succinctly, "readability formulas, being strictly text based, do not reflect the interactive nature of the reading process" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010). The emphasis on word, character, and syllable count in readability formulas poses potential limitations, as not all large words are uncommon or difficult, and not all short words are common and easy. Readability formulas are also unable to detect passive voice or sentence syntax, both important factors when determining a text's difficulty. Despite these shortcomings, however, readability tests do serve as a strong basis for determining a text's general difficulty.

Those studying plain language generally agree that readability is often best assessed when humans are directly involved (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010; Mazur 2000; "Understanding Success Criterion", n.d.). Specifically, because each piece of text is written with an intended audience in mind, it is ultimately through direct user feedback that accurate conclusions are drawn. Additionally, the W3C states that "educators can [...] measure the education level required to read text content" ("Understanding Success Criterion", n.d.).

Due to this project's constraints, direct user feedback was not considered when drawing conclusions about readability. Further studies of CLA webpages would benefit from user feedback and testing or professional analysis.

Section II
Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction
This analysis was conducted to determine the general readability of the Auburn University College of Liberal Arts' department/program pages. Written content from 13 individual pages was tested using a variety of readability formulas. This section will detail the results from these those tests, draw conclusions, and offer recommendations for improving site readability moving forward.

Findings
Though each webpage was tested individually, readability formula scores will be presented as averages across all 13 pages in this section (see Appendix A for individual webpage scores).

Findings will be presented in four sections according to the formula used: Flesch Reading Ease formula, Gunning Fog Index, Automated Readability Index, and Consensus Scores (averaged from seven different readability formulas).

Flesch Reading Ease formula
The Flesch Reading Ease formula was applied to all 13 webpages and the averaged results are presented in Figure 4. The average Flesch Reading Ease score across all pages was 30.5, while the ideal score for achieving readability falls between 60 and 70. Of the 13 College pages, the School of Communication and Journalism homepage is considered most readable with a score of 56.4 and the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures homepage is considered least readable with a score of 15.7 – a higher score is desirable for this formula.
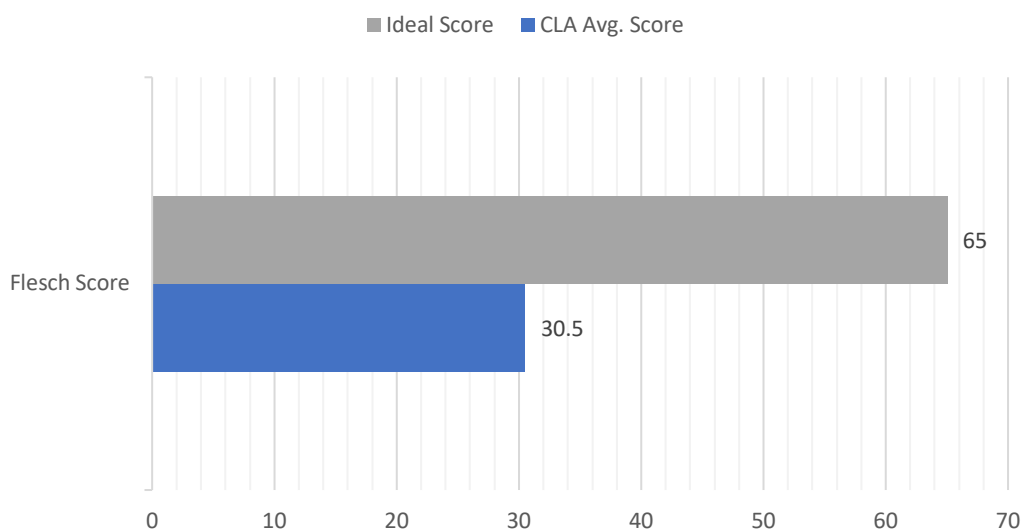

Figure 4. Average Flesch Reading Ease score across all 13 tested pages, compared to the ideal score for meeting near-universal understanding

Gunning Fog Index

The Gunning Fog Index formula was applied to all 13 webpages and the averaged results are presented in Figure 5. The average Gunning Fog Index score across all pages was 17.2, and for a text to achieve near universal understanding it needs a score of less than eight. Of the 13 College pages, the School of Communication and Journalism homepage is considered most readable with a score of 11.6 and the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures homepage is considered least readable with a score of 20.8 – a lower score is desirable for this formula.
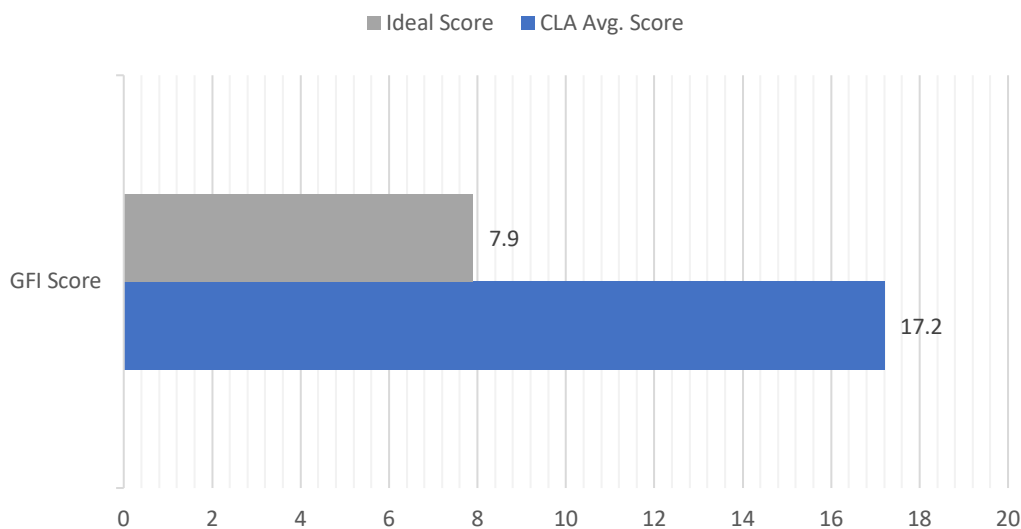
■ Ideal Score ■ CLA Avg. Score

GFI Score
7.9
17.2

0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20

Figure 5. Average Gunning Fog Index score across all 13 tested pages, compared to the ideal score for meeting near-universal understanding

Automated Readability Index

The Automated Readability Index formula was applied to all 13 webpages and the averaged results are presented in Figure 6. The average Automated Readability Index score across all pages was 15.8, and for a text to achieve near universal understanding it needs a score of less than eight. Of the 13 College pages, the Department of Philosophy homepage is considered most readable with a score of 10.6 and the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures homepage is considered least readable with a score of 20.3 – a lower score is desirable for this formula.
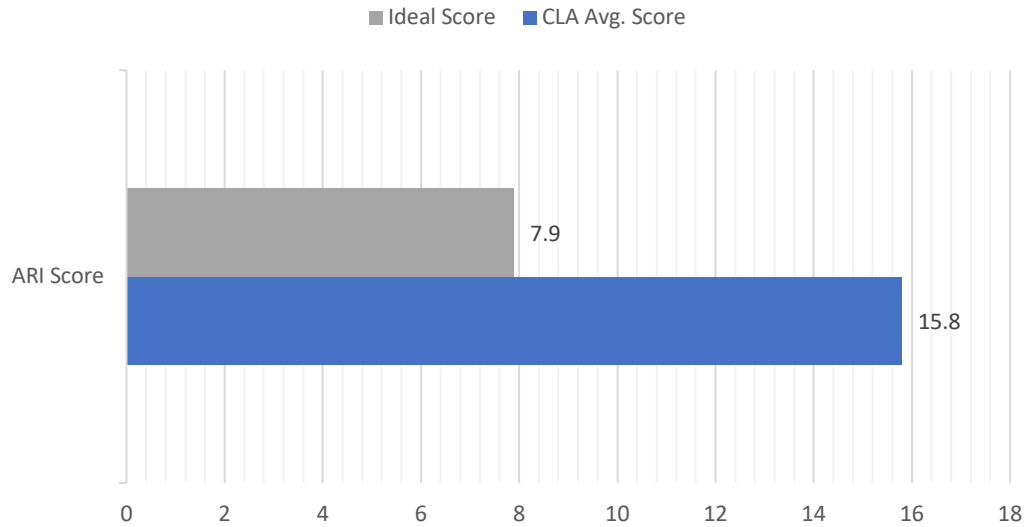
Ideal Score ■ CLA Avg. Score

Figure 6. Average Automated Readability Index score across all 13 tested pages, compared to the ideal score for meeting near-universal understanding

Consensus Scores

In addition to individual readability formula scores, the website used for this analysis also includes consensus results for grade level, reading level, and reader's age. Figure 7 presents the average grade level as composited from all seven readability formulas – a lower score is desirable in terms of grade level. Of the 13 College pages, the Department of Communication and Journalism homepage is considered most readable with a grade of 10 and the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures homepage is considered least readable with a grade of 18.
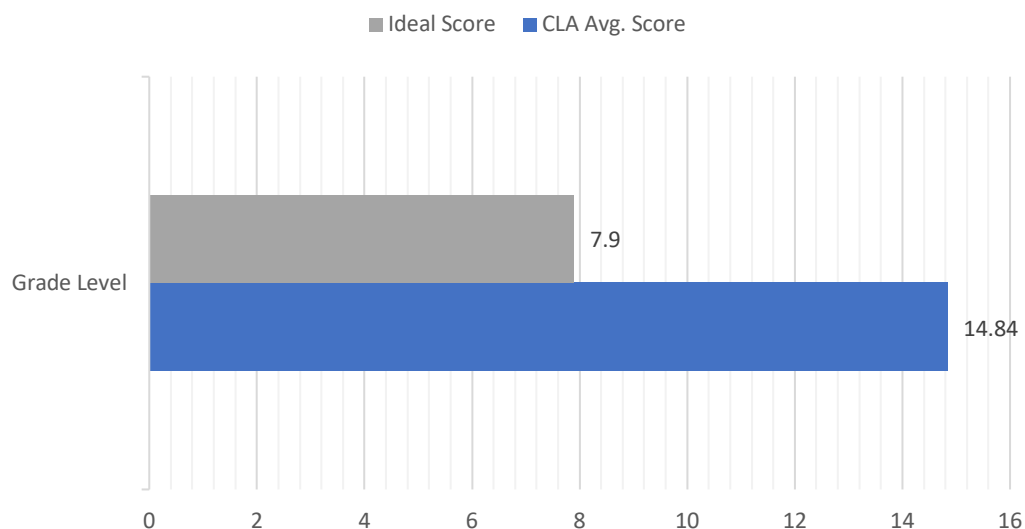
Ideal Score ■ CLA Avg. Score

Figure 7. Average grade level across all 13 tested pages, compared to the ideal score for meeting near-universal understanding

Conclusions

On the basis of the findings, several conclusions concerning the readability of Auburn University's College of Liberal Arts webpages can be drawn. The findings of this analysis indicate that the webpages, at present, do not meet plain language standards, according to the readability formulas used.

When viewed collectively, the CLA webpages' content contains difficult words, long and complex sentences, and lacks sufficient headings, white space, and direct user address. The readability formulas reveal an average grade level of 14.84 across all tested pages, nearly six grade levels higher than the level required to achieve near-universal readability.

As addressed in the Limitations of the Analysis section, though readability formulas cannot be used as sole indicators of a text's difficulty, they are still able to detect the presence of underlying readability issues. In other words, the data included in this report, while valid, points to the general illness, but not necessarily all of the symptoms.

Because the majority of CLA site visitors are prospective undergraduate students, it is in the College's best interest to reassess all web content with grade level and overall readability in mind. To ensure accessibility and to reach as wide of an audience as possible, all content should be vetted with plain language standards in mind. The final section of this analysis is a proposed methodology for assessing web content.

Recommendations (Proposed Methodology)

The following methodology is a set of guidelines intended for use when reworking current content or for developing new content on all CLA webpages. The list includes recommendations from a variety of sources ("What is plain language?", n.d.; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010; "Five Steps to Plain Language", n.d.; "Plain Language: A Promising Strategy", n.d.) and has been refined, specifically, for CLA webpages. Though the list is certainly not exhaustive, if used consistently and properly, it will ensure greater access for all site visitors regardless of background.

Before content is published, the writer should ensure all of the following criterion are met:

White space has been maximized
Headings have been used wherever possible
No sentence exceeds 25 words
Sentence lengths are varied
Short, numbered and bulleted lists have been used for lists greater than four
Writing is in the simple present tense
The reader is addressed directly (e.g. "you" or "we") wherever possible
Content is written in the active voice
Contractions have been used wherever possible
All unnecessary or redundant words have been eliminated

Content does not exceed a twelfth-grade reading level according to readability formula consensus

As demonstration of these criterion in use, the homepage for the Foreign Languages and Literatures department has been rewritten and reformatted (see Appendix B). During the rewrite, text was checked against each criteria (e.g. white space was maximized by shortening paragraph lengths, headings were added, all sentences were shortened to 25 words or less, etc.). Overall, due to these changes, the Foreign Languages and Literatures homepage content was brought from an 18th grade reading level to a 10th grade reading level.

References

Federal plain language guidelines. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.plainlanguage.gov/guidelines/

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Plain Language: A Promising Strategy for Clearly Communicating Health Information and Improving Health Literacy. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://health.gov/communication/literacy/plainlanguage/PlainLanguage.htm

Understanding Success Criterion 1.3.5: Reading Level. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG21/Understanding/reading-level.html

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2010) *Using readability formulas: A cautionary note.*

What is plain language? (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.plainlanguage.gov/about/definitions/

Appendix A
Text Samples and Their Readability Formula Scores

Political Science – About Page
https://cla.auburn.edu/polisci/undergraduate-programs/political-science/about-political-science/

Sample Text

Are you interested in American politics? International affairs? Critical issues such as health, the environment, civil rights? Theories concerning the ideal government and how power and resources are allocated in society? Do you want to study these subjects and pursue a career based on your interest? If so, you should consider studying [title removed].

[title removed] students can gain a versatile set of skills that can be applied in a wide range of exciting careers in federal, state and local governments; law; business; international organizations; nonprofit associations and organizations; campaign management and polling; journalism; precollegiate education; electoral politics; research and university and college teaching.

Individual Scores
Gunning Fog – 16.5
Flesch Reading Ease – 24
ARI – 13.1

Consensus
Grade level – 13
Reading level – very difficult to read
Reader's age – 18-19

Sociology – Landing Page
https://cla.auburn.edu/sociology/sociology-program/

Sample Text

[title removed] is devoted to the study of the social context of human behavior and interaction, with a particular focus on groups, networks, social institutions, and social change. Students completing the [title removed] degree are required to develop and demonstrate skills in oral and written communication, critical thinking, and in research. Graduates in [title removed] are prepared for careers in a variety of fields including personnel management, communication and public relations, law, the criminal justice system and resource management, among many others. Many students also choose to pursue advanced degrees in [title removed] and other social sciences, law, or other related fields.

Individual Scores
Gunning Fog – 17.9
Flesch Reading Ease – 24.6
ARI – 16.6

Consensus
Grade level – 16
Reading level – very difficult to read
Reader's age – college graduate (22+)

Anthropology – About Page
https://cla.auburn.edu/sociology/anthropology/

Sample Text
The [title removed] program at Auburn University takes a four-field approach to the study of the human condition, offering courses in archaeology, biological [title removed], cultural [title removed], and linguistic [title removed]. Students majoring in [title removed] will sample the variety of topics within the discipline while gaining specialized knowledge in each of the four fields. Classes are generally small to allow for an intimate exchange of knowledge between faculty and students.

Students may major or minor in [title removed] and introductory classes are offered in Auburn's core curriculum exposing all students to topics integral to diversity and global studies. With an undergraduate degree in [title removed], students can continue their academic work in a number of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences at the graduate level, or prepare for a profession in government, the non-profit and educational sectors, or industry. [title removed] forge careers in archaeology, cultural resource management, environmental and human impact assessment, analysis, policy making and analysis, and research, among others.

Individual Scores
Gunning Fog – 19.3
Flesch Reading Ease – 18.5
ARI – 17.1

Consensus
Grade Level – 16
Reading level – very difficult to read
Reader's age – college graduate (22+)

Social Work – About Page
https://cla.auburn.edu/sociology/social-work/

Sample Text
The [title removed] program at Auburn University offers a Bachelor of Arts degree in [title removed] and Masters of [title removed] (MSW). The Bachelor of Arts degree is fully accredited by the Council on [title removed] Education. A person with a degree from an accredited institution is eligible to take the examination for licensure as a baccalaureate-level social worker (LBSW) and apply for advanced standing in [title removed] graduate programs.

The MSW program was approved by the Auburn University Board of Trustees in February 2016 and by the Alabama Council on Higher Education in September 2016. The program began in fall of 2017 and is currently in Candidacy for accreditation from the Council on [title removed] Education (CSWE).

Alabama's [title removed] licensing law provides for licensing social workers at three levels: bachelors (LBSW), masters (LMSW), and independent clinical (LICSW). One becomes licensed by completing a [title removed] degree from a college or university, approved, accredited or in candidacy granted by the Council by [title removed] Education. A person who graduates from Auburn University with a [title removed] (BSW or MSW) may become licensed if he or she applies and passes the test for the bachelor or masters level.

Individual Scores
Gunning Fog – 13.9
Flesch Reading Ease – 31.7
ARI – 13.3

Consensus
Grade Level – 13
Reading level – difficult to read
Reader's age – 18-19

B.A. in Psychology – About Page
https://cla.auburn.edu/psychology/welcome-to-the-department-of-psychology/the-psychology-major/

Sample Text
Our curriculum is designed to provide undergraduates with the best possible education in [title removed]. We seek to provide students with all the scientific tools necessary for success in this field as well as an introduction to the various content areas of [title removed] and supervised practical experience for those wishing to attain the [title removed] degree.

The student learning outcomes for [title removed] are established by the American [title removed] Association, and the department aligns with these learning outcomes:

- **Knowledge in** [title removed]: Students will be able to identify basic [title removed] concepts.

- **Scientific Inquiry and Critical Thinking**: Students will be able to critically evaluate and apply basic [title removed] concepts by means of scientific reasoning acquired from training in statistics and research methods.

- **Ethical and Social Responsibility in a Diverse World**: Students will be able to apply ethical standards to evaluate [title removed] science and practice.

- **Communication:** Students will be able to interact effectively with others.

- **Professional Development**: Students should be involved in research and outreach opportunities as preparation for pursuing post-baccalaureate education to become future scientists and/or practitioners in a [title removed] discipline, and to develop necessary skills to be successful in employment after earning their degree.

Individual Scores
Gunning Fog – 17.9
Flesch Reading Ease – 17.9
ARI – 18.6

Aviation – About Page
https://cla.auburn.edu/aviation/

Sample Text
Since the Wright Brother's first flight in 1903, [title removed] has continued to transform the global landscape by connecting nations, economies, and cultures. Auburn University has been actively involved in [title removed] education for over 75 years and is centrally located and well connected to a hub of world-class [title removed] headquarters and organizations in the Southeast.

Our team takes a holistic, inter-disciplinary approach to [title removed] education and research. A strong sense of community and passion is evident among our 4,000+ [title removed] alumni who are well known for their positive contributions in all fields of the [title removed] industry.

With an eye to the future in preparing [title removed] leaders that will shape the next century of flight, the [title removed] degree programs within the University College are now housed in the College of Liberal Arts. The move strengthens both degree programs by allowing students to spend more time on [title removed] -related coursework and flying, and consolidating [title removed] resources and management functions in the new Department of [title removed]. The department will move into the new Delta Air Lines [title removed] Education Building in Fall 2018.

Individual Scores
Gunning Fog – 16
Flesch Reading Ease – 41.7
ARI – 14.3

Consensus
Grade Level – 14
Reading level – difficult to read
Reader's age – 21-22

B.A. in Studio Art – About Page
https://cla.auburn.edu/art/programs/ba-in-studio-art/

Sample Text
The BA in [title removed] degree is ideal for students who are passionate about art but also want to take advantage of additional academic courses of study across Auburn University. The flexibility of the BA degree allows students to combine the study of art with a major or minor in other fields within the College of Liberal Arts or other Auburn University Schools such as Education, Business, or Communication. The BA degree in [title removed prepares students for advanced study in [title removed], a broad range of art-related careers, or professions in which an understanding of art, aesthetics, and visual design is important.

Individual Scores
Gunning Fog – 18.1
Flesch Reading Ease – 27.5
ARI – 18.3

Consensus
Grade Level – 16
Reading level – very difficult to read
Reader's age – college graduate (22+)

B.F.A. in Performance (Theatre) – About Page
https://cla.auburn.edu/theatre/academics/bfa-performance-music-theatre/

Sample
The **BFA in [title removed]** is a two-year degree that builds on foundational courses offered in the BA, and offers studio acting, voice, and movement training with professional actors, as well as opportunities to participate in a wide variety of production experiences. The student auditions for the BFA in the spring of their sophomore year, and begins this rigorous course of study in the fall of their junior year. Students engage in scene study, text analysis, voice, speech, dialects, mask work, make up, on camera training, and audition workshops with working professional actors and producers. The degree will serve undergraduate actors seeking graduate school placement and professional employment.

Individual Scores
Gunning Fog – 19.7
Flesch Reading Ease – 33.4
ARI – 16.9

Consensus
Grade Level – 16
Reading level – difficult to read
Reader's age – college graduate (22+)

Music – About Page
https://cla.auburn.edu/music/prospective-students/programs-of-study/

Sample
All graduate and undergraduate degrees are approved by the National Association of Schools of [title removed] (NASM). Scholarships and graduate assistantships are available for campus-based students from the Music Department and the Department of Curriculum and Teaching.

Our highly skilled faculty teach students to expect excellence in all aspects of performance and practice, giving them the tools necessary to achieve this expectation and accomplish their [title removed] goals. Whether a student wants to be a performer, conductor, educator or any combination, they can learn the skills necessary to navigate through the opportunities and obstacles that await them.

Students are engaged in a variety of [title removed] and academic concentrations:
• Private instruction
• Individual performance
• Large and small ensemble participation
• [title removed] academic classes

Individual Scores
Gunning Fog – 18.9
Flesch Reading Ease – 19.2
ARI – 17.7

Consensus
Grade Level – 17
Reading level – very difficult to read
Reader's age – college graduate (22+)

Communication – Landing Page
https://cla.auburn.edu/cmjn/communication/

Sample
The [title removed] program provides students with a comprehensive understanding of the nature of [title removed] in order to prepare them with the knowledge and skills to live and work in a diverse and complex society.

The program emphasizes [title removed] Theory, Research and Practice. Theory courses, such as CMJN 2100, COMM 3500 and COMM 3600, introduce theoretical underpinnings of the [title removed] discipline. Research-based classes include COMM 3510 and COMM 3610. These and related classes teach students how to evaluate research as well as formulate and test their own discipline-specific questions. Context courses, such as Health [title removed] and Legal [title removed], allow students to apply [title removed] theories and concepts to real world contexts and practice.

Individual Scores
Gunning Fog – 11.6
Flesch Reading Ease – 56.4
ARI – 11.3

Consensus
Grade Level – 10
Reading level – fairly difficult to read
Reader's age – 14-15

Foreign Languages and Literature – About Page
https://cla.auburn.edu/forlang/

Sample

The Department of [title removed] is part of the College of Liberal Arts and shares its vision for equipping well-rounded students for entry into the global community. Communication skills, linguistic dexterity, critical thinking and cultural awareness provide learners with the practical tools they will need in today's competitive, multilingual marketplace; of equal importance is the broader understanding of society the student acquires through cultural exchange in the target [title removed].

Our diverse course offerings range from basic-intermediate-advanced [title removed] studies and traditional linguistics and [title removed] courses to topic-driven courses in film, cultural identity, and [title removed] business. Students also can benefit from interdisciplinary "[title removed] Across the Curriculum" and "Service Learning" outreach courses that extend the classroom beyond the traditional campus. Students pursuing [title removed] majors and minors and graduate degrees enjoy myriad careers in the fields of business, communications, education and government; many cite their [title removed] skills as the foundation for their continued studies in medicine, law, business, and academia.

[title removed] study is simply part of a very basic liberal education: to educate is to lead out of confinement and narrowness and darkness.

Individual Scores
Gunning Fog – 20.8
Flesch Reading Ease – 15.7
ARI – 20.3

Consensus
Grade Level – 18
Reading level – very difficult to read
Reader's age – college graduate (22+)

Philosophy – About Page
https://cla.auburn.edu/philosophy/

Sample

The study of [title removed] is its own reward. It deepens and intensifies engagement with fundamental questions regarding the self, others, and the world that arise in everyday life. But the study of [title removed] also offers great practical rewards. It cultivates skills in clear thinking, writing, logical criticism, and it increases the power and discipline of the imagination.

Studying [title removed] is excellent preparation for graduate study, professional school, seminary, and any career path in which clear thought and expression are valued. The scores of [title removed] majors on the GRE, the LSAT, and the GMAT are among the highest of any major. According to a recent study, those who have only a bachelor's degree in [title removed] see their salaries grow at a faster rate than do majors from any other discipline.

Individual Scores
Gunning Fog – 14.2
Flesch Reading Ease – 46.3
ARI – 10.6

Consensus
Grade Level – 12
Reading level – difficult to read
Reader's age – 17-18

B.A. in Literature – About Page
https://cla.auburn.edu/english/literature/

Sample
The [title removed] track at Auburn seeks to provide a student with various tools to read critically works of diverse periods, genres, and authors. While we do offer advanced courses in [title removed] written originally in languages other than [title removed], the focus of the Major is [title removed] -Language [title removed].

As a [title removed] Major, he or she will learn to improve writing skills by developing the ability to construct arguments from the texts he or she is studying, be conversant in the terms of a particular genre and the historical period in which a work was written, and be able to write using a critical methodology. The research project in the Seminar (ENGL 4800) provides the student with the opportunity to pull all these skills together in order to produce a document that can serve as a writing sample for a job or for graduate admission.

Individual Scores
Gunning Fog – 19.2
Flesch Reading Ease – 39.3
ARI – 17.2

Consensus
Grade Level – 15
Reading level – difficult to read
Reader's age – college graduate (22+)

Appendix B
Sample Rewrite of Dep. Of Foreign Languages and Literatures Homepage

Original Text – Grade Level = 18

The Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures is part of the College of Liberal Arts and shares its vision for equipping well-rounded students for entry into the global community. Communication skills, linguistic dexterity, critical thinking and cultural awareness provide learners with the practical tools they will need in today's competitive, multilingual marketplace; of equal importance is the broader understanding of society the student acquires through cultural exchange in the target language.

Our diverse course offerings range from basic-intermediate-advanced language studies and traditional linguistics and literature courses to topic-driven courses in film, cultural identity, and foreign language business. Students also can benefit from interdisciplinary "Languages Across the Curriculum" and "Service Learning" outreach courses that extend the classroom beyond the traditional campus. Students pursuing foreign language majors and minors and graduate degrees enjoy myriad careers in the fields of business, communications, education and government; many cite their foreign language skills as the foundation for their continued studies in medicine, law, business, and academia.

Foreign language study is simply part of a very basic liberal education: to educate is to lead out of confinement and narrowness and darkness.

Rewritten Text – Grade Level = 10

Our Goal
The Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures values practical knowledge and provides students with the tools to succeed in any culture. Our goal is to prepare you for entry into the global workforce by fostering strong communication and critical thinking skills.

About Our Courses
Our course offerings are diverse and range from basic, intermediate, and advanced language and literature studies to courses on film, identity, and business.

You can also benefit from diverse studies in other departments and the Auburn community through our "Languages Across the Curriculum" and "Service Learning" courses.

Our graduates go on to enjoy careers in:

- Business
- Communications
- Education
- Government
- Medicine
- Law