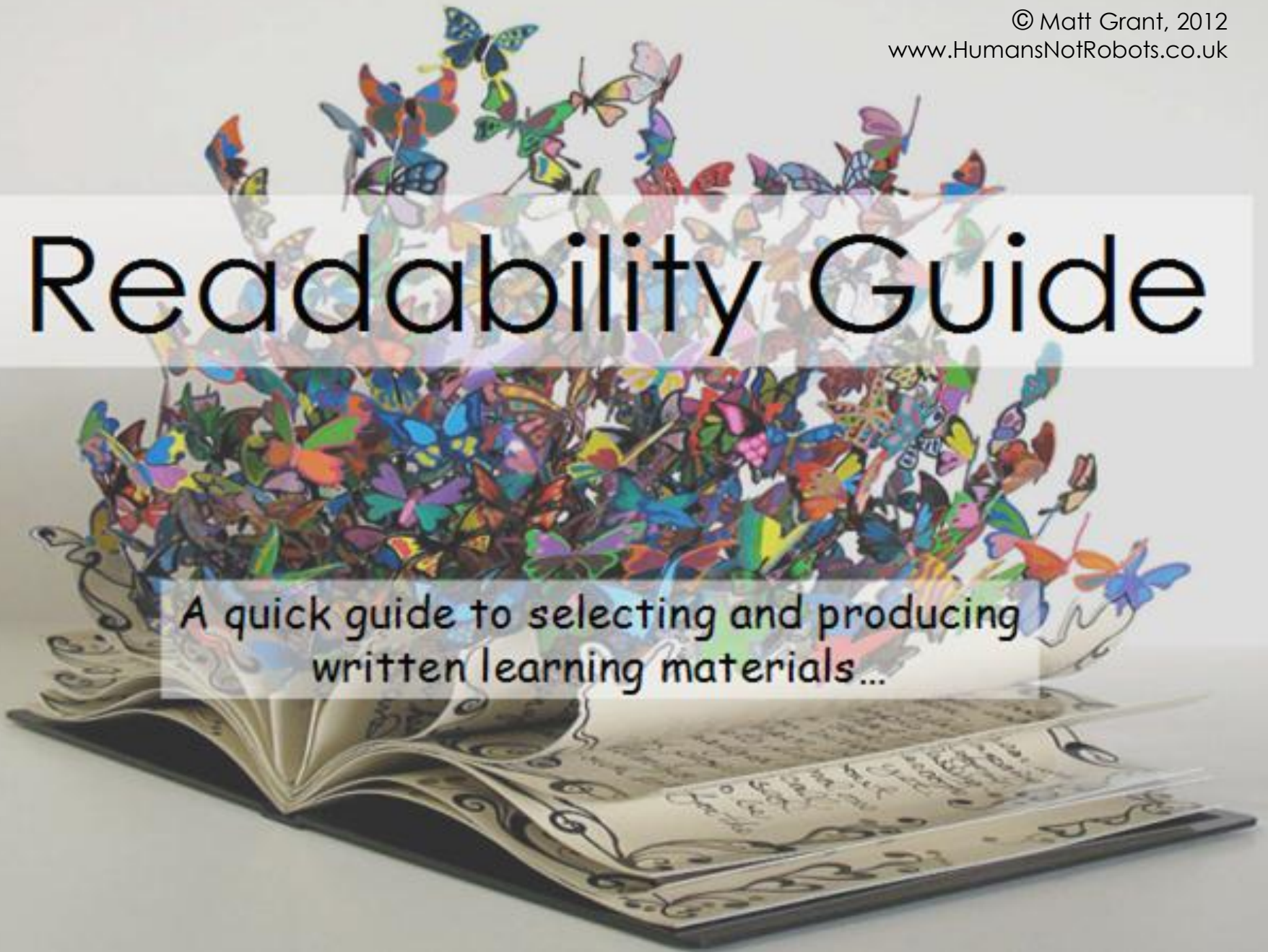


Readability Guide

A quick guide to selecting and producing
written learning materials...



>> 1. Layout

A complicated, stylish design might make the

with reading difficulties.

(1) Make sure readers can find their way around a text easily. Number the paragraphs or sections to help with navigation.

(2) Avoid squeezing too much text onto one page. Use two pages if you have to. Use 1.25 – 1.5 for line spacing.

(3) Keep columns well spaced to avoid readers going across rather than down. Lines between columns can help.

(4) **Headers**

Use headers to introduce new subtopics and demarcate different parts of a text.

text more appealing initially

but on closer inspection, can confuse those

>> 2. Fonts


WRITING IN CAPITALS CAN QUICKLY TIRE THE BRAIN BECAUSE YOU HAVE TO SPEND MORE TIME CONVERTING THE LETTERS BACK TO HOW WE HAVE LEARNT TO READ.

Some fonts like century gothic, and comic sans, are nice and easy to read because they are simple and mirror *handwriting* - especially letters such as 'a' and 'g'.

Others require MORE CONCENTRATION as our **EYES** and **BRAINS** work extra hard to clean up the FANCY FEATURES.

14pts is generally viewed as the optimum size for ease of reading. 12pts is OK, but anything lower will strain the eyes.

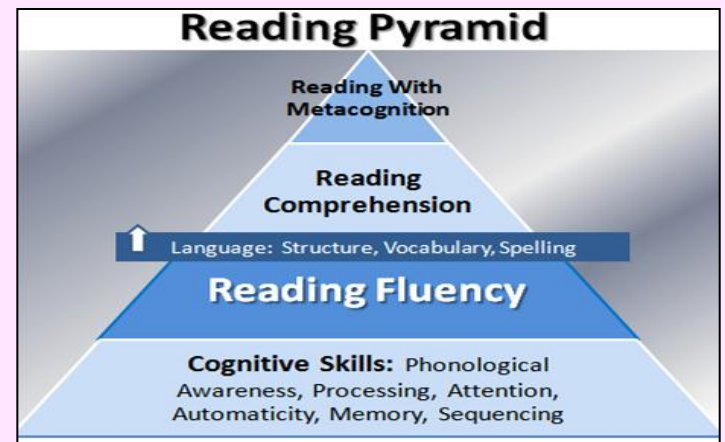
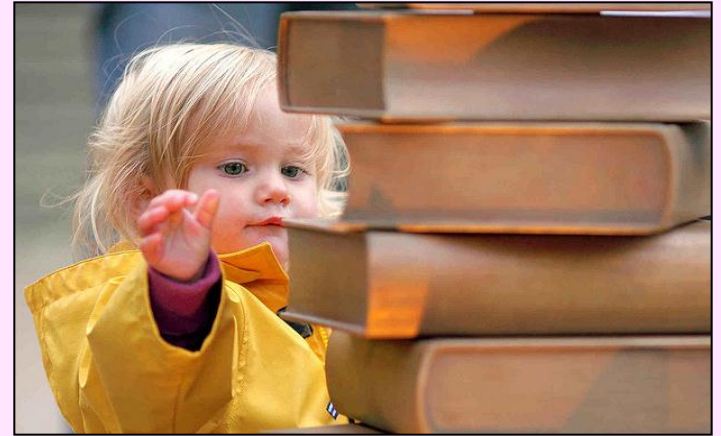
With anything **bigger**, readers tend to view it as childish!



**“A capacity and taste for reading gives access to whatever
has already been discovered by others.” - Abraham Lincoln**

>> 3. Images

- Use images that reinforce the messages in the text, to give poor readers clues.
- Be careful not to crowd the text with images. Too many images will distract from the text.
- Sometimes a diagram can be used as a back-up or a complete replacement for the text.



>> 4. Colour

Contrast lets you determine an edge. It is vital in recognising shapes. It enables you to distinguish letters and read words.

Too little contrast in the foreground and you will suffer eye strain when trying to focus too hard. This includes reading in low light.

Too much contrast in the foreground and you will suffer from eye strain because of the harshness and glare.

Too much black text on a white background is said to cause this. Reading this kind of text for sustained periods will gradually damage your eyesight.

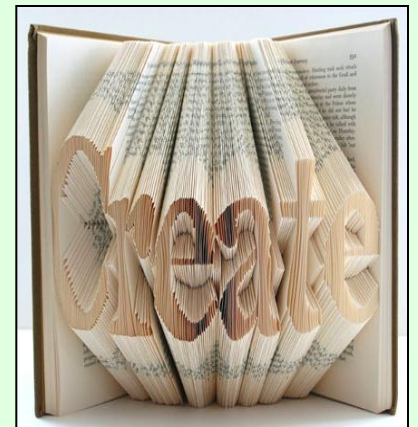
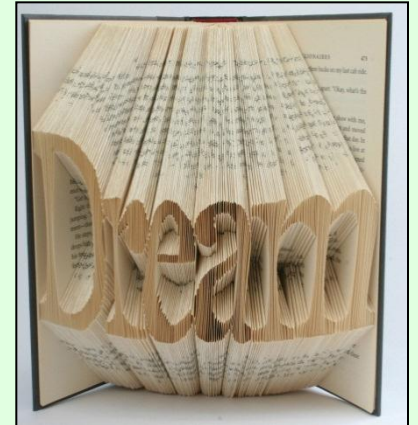
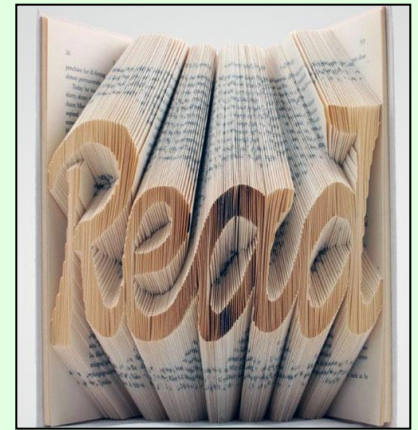
Using a
pastel coloured background,
where possible,
is much easier on the eyes.

**"To read a writer is for me not merely to get an idea of what he says,
but to go off with him and travel in his company." - Andre Gide**



>> 5. Language

- Vocabulary is a term for familiarity with and understanding of words. Sometimes new vocabulary needs **pre-teaching** before use within the context of a text.
- Deliberate **repetition** of key vocabulary can be useful. Students typically begin to grasp new vocabulary after the third time of experiencing it.
- Try to keep sentences simple - **one key point per sentence** is recommended for KS3 and KS4 students.



>> 6. Tools



Use a ruler to track lines and keep place.



Use a highlighter pen to identify tricky words.

Use coloured overlays if you rely on black and white texts which cannot be adapted.



"There are many little ways to enlarge your child's world.

Love of books is the best of all." - Jacqueline Kennedy



>> 7. Group Reading

Group reading can be a daunting activity for many students, regardless of their reading skills. To make this easier for them (and for you), establish the following as **a routine with every text**.



- 1) Number the paragraphs or parts of the text. This will help everyone in **keeping track**.
- 2) Ask for **volunteers** amongst the group (at first this might be very few, but it will grow with time.)
- 3) Give each volunteer a number. The sizes of each part will likely vary – providing a good opportunity to **differentiate**.
- 4) Give students a few minutes to read and rehearse their part. Ask them to **underline any tricky words** – go round and clarify them.
- 5) Begin reading as a group – **praise** every effort!

>> Going further → SMOG check

The SMOG Readability Formula estimates the years of education a person needs to understand a piece of writing. This is known as a SMOG grade - which can then also point to an Age Equivalent Estimate.

Calculating the SMOG Grade:

Step 1: Take the entire text to be assessed.

Step 2: Count 10 sentences.

Step 3: Count every word with three or more syllables.

Step 4: Calculate the square root of the number arrived at in Step 3 and round off to nearest 10.

Step 5: Add 3 to the figure arrived at in Step 4 to know the SMOG Grade, i.e., the years of education that a person must have reached if he is to understand fully the text assessed.

Step 6: To get an Age Equivalent Estimate, add 5 (the number of years before someone enters education) to the SMOG Grade.

>> Additional information:

This website allows you to paste **text** in and grade it using the SMOG index:

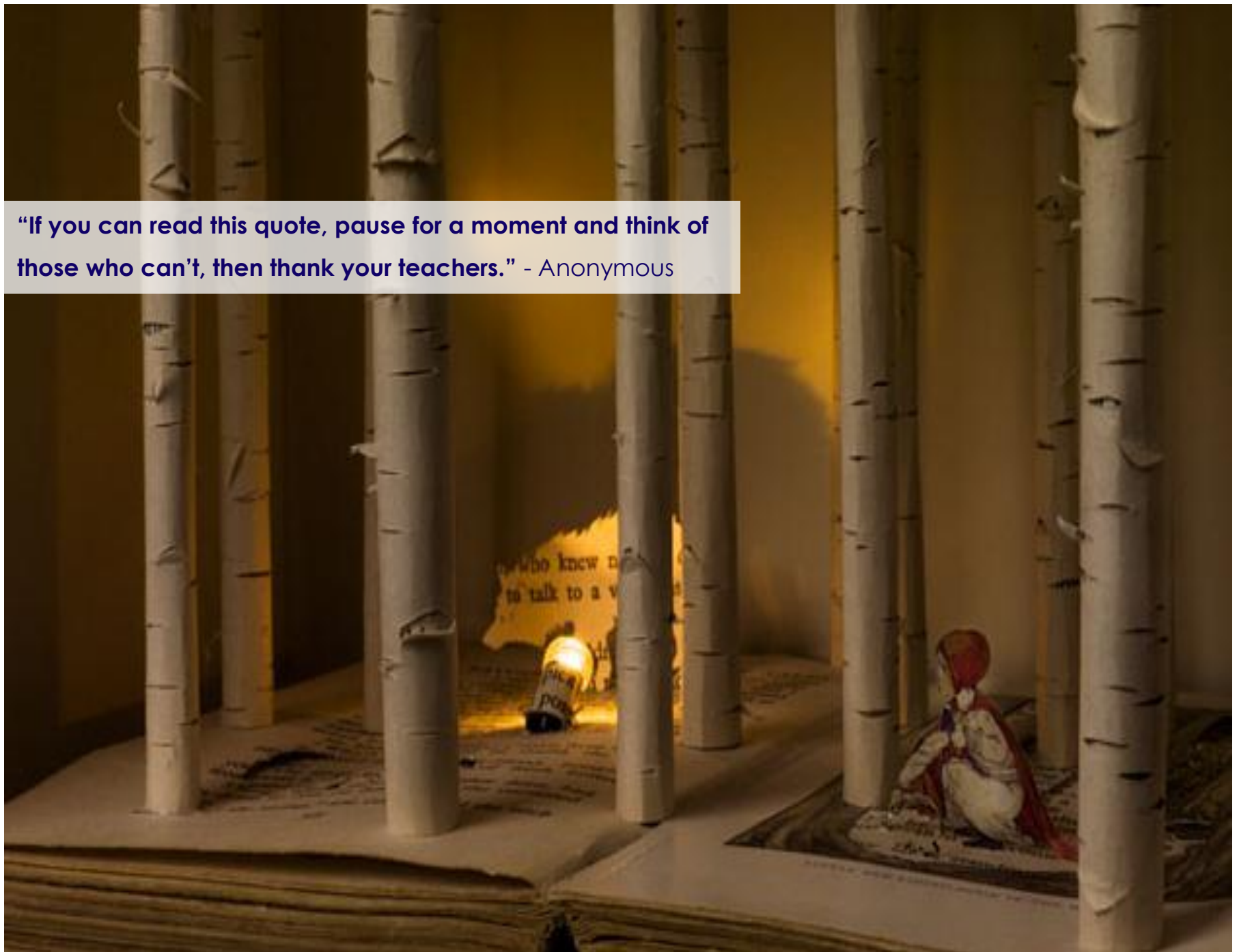
→ www.online-utility.org/english/readability_test_and_improve.jsp

This website will also check the reading level of any **website** you type in:

→ www.juicystudio.com/services/readability.php?url



"If you can read this quote, pause for a moment and think of those who can't, then thank your teachers." - Anonymous



For further resources or to contact the author, please visit:

www.HumansNotRobots.co.uk

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