How to use the readability statistics

You can check the readability of any document you have created in Microsoft ® Word or any document you load into Word. By default, this is probably switched off. To switch on readability statistics,

- click File > Options
- select Proofing tab
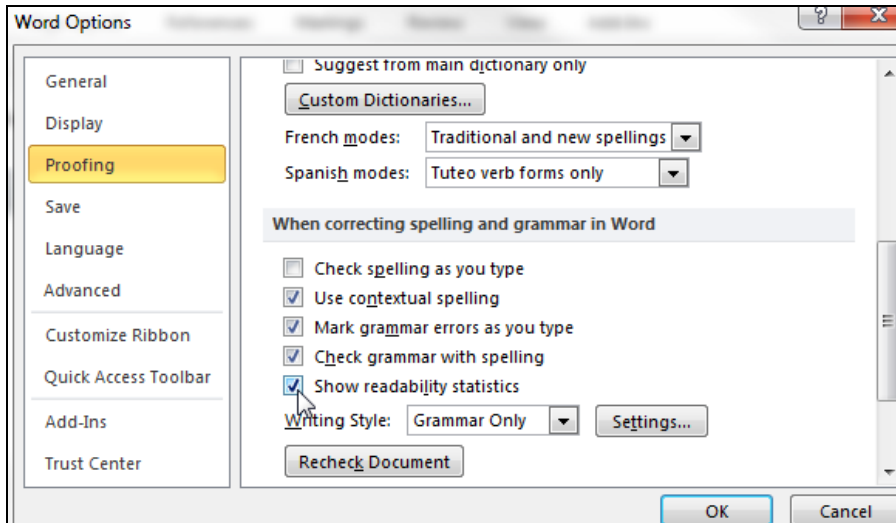- scroll down to 'Show readability statistics' and tick the check box.

Figure 2 - Image showing Word options with the proofing tab highlighted and "Show readability statistics" checked.

To view the readability statistics, open the file that you want to check and run the spelling and grammar check. When Word finishes checking the spelling and grammar, it displays information about the reading level of the document in one of two scales.

Flesch Reading Ease test: This rates text on a 100-point scale. The higher the score, the easier it is to understand the document. In the UK context these are the scores for typical pages on popular online sites:

- BBC Primary schools website (73);
- Daily Star (66);
- The Sun (60);
- Guardian/Daily Mail (58.5);
- Daily Telegraph (54.6);
- Nature (34.6).

Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level test: This rates text on a U.S. school grade level (shaded in Table 1). A score of 8.0 means that an eighth grader can understand it. See Table 1 for conversion to ages and UK school years.
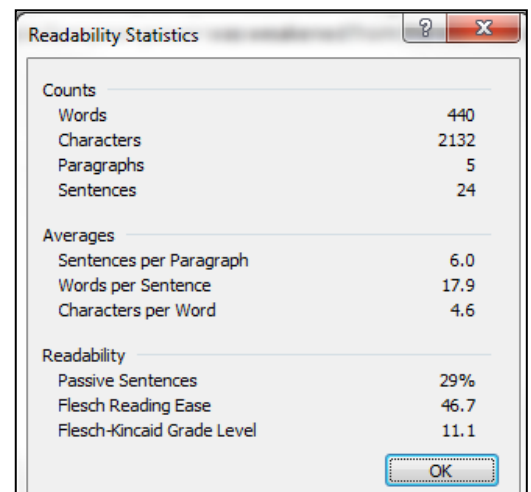

Figure 1 - Readability Statistics displayed in a Word document

Age	US Grade	UK Year
5 - 10	Kindergarten - 5th	Years 1 - 6
11 - 13	6th - 8th	Years 7 - 9
14 - 18	9th - 12th (Senior)	Years 10 - 13

Table 1 - US school grade level and the equivalent age and UK school year