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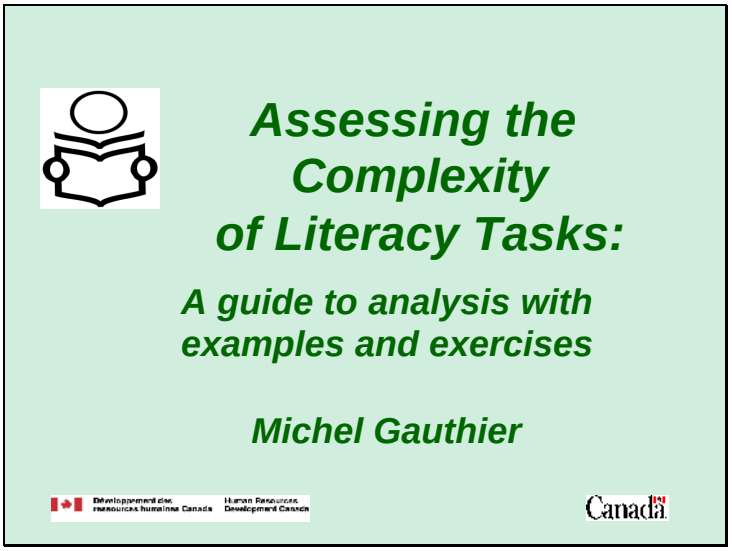
across disciplines and around the world



RATING GUIDE

Table of Contents

Rating Guide

Rating Chart - Task Complexity

Type of Information

Type of Match

Type of Match in Prose Processing

Type of Match in Document Processing

Quantitative Factors

- Type of Operation
- Specificity of Operation

Plausibility of Distractors

The PMOSE/IKIRSCH Document Readability Formula

Determining IALS Level

Notes

Rating Guide *

Step 1

Identify the task(s) to be considered. In any document, some of the literacy tasks associated with using it are clearly beneath the level where analysis is necessary. Other tasks are more complex and critical to the successful use of the document.
The form on the next page (p. 32) can be used as a guide for the rating. Photocopy as many copies of the form as you have tasks to rate.

Step 2

Decide whether the task has the feature of a *Prose*, *Document use*, or *Quantitative* task. Remember that many quantitative tasks also have a 'document use' component. Use your judgement to decide which part of the task adds most to task difficulty.

Step 3

. **Rate each complexity factor appropriate to the type of task on the chart provided.** The charts and rubrics you will need to complete the ratings can be found on pages 33 to 41. To help you identify which chart is used for which task, the following symbols are used:

	P	D	Q
Task type:	**Prose**	**Document**	**Quantitative**

Step 4

Compare the combined ratings for each task with the typical values for each IALS level in the chart on page 42 to arrive at an estimate of complexity. Enter the estimate at the bottom of the rating chart.

* Rating charts and rubrics in this section adapted from: Mosenthal, P. and Kirsch, I. (1994). *Defining the Proficiency Standards of Adult Literacy in the US: A Profile Approach*

Rating Chart - Task Complexity

Document _____

Task Description _____

_____

Notes _____

_____

Complexity of Cognitive Processing (Ratings)

Task Type	P Prose	D Document	Q Quantitative
Type of information (p33)			
Type of match (pp3-36)			
Type of operation (p37)			
Specificity of Operation (p38)			
Plausibility of distractors (p39)			

Total of processing complexity ratings _____

Complexity of document rating (p41) **+** _____

Total rating (processing + document **=** _____

Predicted complexity level (IALS) (p42) _____

Type of Information

P D

Use the chart below to rate the 'type of information' factor in prose and document processing tasks

Type of Information	Rating
person, animal, place (noun, not relationship), thing	1
amounts, times, attributes, types, actions, locations	2
manner, goal, purpose, alternative, referent for a pronoun, predicate adjective	3
cause, effect, reason, result, similarity, explanation	4
equivalence, difference, theme or pattern.	5

Type of Match

P D

Two scoring ‘rubrics’ are provided on the following two pages. One is for ‘type of match’ in prose processing tasks; the other is used for rating ‘type of match’ document processing tasks.

Using the Scoring Rubrics

The scoring rubrics for ‘type of match’ in prose and document tasks use an additive scheme for scoring. To use the rubrics, start at the top statement in the chart and read down. When the statement applies to the task under consideration, add the value indicated. Use a piece of scratch paper to keep track of the total.

You will immediately see that under the right conditions, the total score using these rubrics might reach as high as 20 for some hypothetically difficult task. However, in real life literacy tasks, the total score usually ranges from 1 to 7.

Your rating should follow the rubric from top to bottom:

Item	Task Feature	Score
1.	Cycle +3 ➔ Between paragraphs +1 ↓	4
2.	3 Search phrases +2 ↓	2
3.	2 Item response +1 ↓	1
4.	Synonymous match +0 ↓	0
5.	Requested information frame requires inference +2	2
	Total (All above) =	9

Type of Match in Prose Processing

P

1. If locate, add 1;

If cycle, add 2;

Additional Task Features (in gray)

If within paragraph, add 0;
If between paragraphs, add 1;

If 2 cycles, add 0;
If 3 cycles, add 1
If 4 cycles, add 2
If 5 cycles, add 3
If more than 5, add 4

If integrate, add 3;

If compare, or infer condition based on synthesis of features identified throughout paragraph, add 0;
If contrast, or infer condition based on synthesis of features identified between paragraphs, add 1

If generate, add 5.

2. If 1 phrase to search on, add 0;
if 2 phrases to search on, add 1;
if 3 phrases to search on, add 2;
if 4 phrases to search on, add 3.

3. If 1 item response, add 0;
if 2 item response, add 1;
if 3-4 item response, add 2;
if 5 or more items response, add 3.

For multiple responses:
If number of responses is specified, add 0;
If number of responses unspecified, add 1;

4. **For given information:**
If match is literal or synonymous, add 0;
if match requires a low text-based inference, add 1;
if match requires a high text-based inference, add 3.

5. **For requested information:**
If completion of new information frame requires no inference or the identification of a paradigmatic relationship, add 0;
If completion of new information frame requires a low text-based inference, identification of a condition, identification of an antecedent, or restatement of information, add 2;
if completion of new information frame requires some specialized prior knowledge or the identification of a syntagmatic relationship, add 3;
if completion of new information frame requires a high text-based inference, add 4.

Type of Match in Document Processing

D

1. If locate, add 1;

If cycle, add 2; → If independent, add 0; If dependent, add 1; → If 2 cycles, add 0; If 3 cycles, add 1 If 4 cycles, add 2 If 5 cycles, add 3 If more than 5 cycles, add 4

If integrate, add 3; → If compare, add 0; If contrast, add 1.

If generate, add 5.

Additional Task Features (in gray)

↓

2. If 1 feature match, add 0;
If 2 feature match, add 1;
If 3 feature match, add 2;
If 4 feature match, add 3;

↓

3. If 1 item response, add 0;
if 2 - 3 item response, add 1;
if 4-5 item response, add 2;
if 6 or more item response, add 3.

→ **For multiple responses:**
If number of responses is specified, add 0;
If number of responses unspecified, add 1;

↓

4. **For given information:**
If match is literal or synonymous, add 0;
if match requires a low text-based inference, estimation, or recognition of a condition stated elsewhere in the document, add 1;
if match requires a high text-based inference, add 3.

↓

5. **For requested information:**
If completion of new information frame requires no inference, add 0;
If completion of new information frame requires a low text-based inference, add 2;
if completion of new information frame requires a high text-based inference, add 4.

Quantitative Factors

Type of Operation
Specificity of Operation

Use the chart on this page and the 'additive rubric' on the next page to rate the two factors important to the complexity of quantitative processing

Type of Operation Q

Type of Operation	Rating
Single addition	1
Single subtraction	2
Single multiplication	3
Single division	4
Combined operations	5

Specificity of Operation

Q

1. If numbers are in row and column format, add 0
   If numbers are not in column format, add 1;

2. If numbers are adjacent, add 0
   If numbers are not adjacent, add 1

3. If labels and amounts are identified without a search, add 0;
   If labels are present and amounts identified with a search, add 1;
   If labels are inferred and amounts identified with a search. add 2;

4. If operation is identified by +, -, x, or (divide symbol), or states 'add (or total),' 'subtract,' 'multiply,' or 'divide,' add 0;
   If semantic relation is stated, e.g. 'how much more,' 'how much less,' 'how many times,' 'calculate the difference,' add 1;
   If operation is easily inferred, e.g. 'how much is saved,' 'deduct,' add 2;
   If operation is based on known ratios, e.g. 'percent of,' add 3.

5. If numbers are present, add 0;
   If numbers entered or identified in previous task, add 1;

6. If units require no transformation, add 0
   If units require transformation, e.g. time to fraction of an hour, or require converting to common units, e.g. fractions, add 1

Plausibility of Distractors

P

Distractors	Rating
No plausible distractors	1
Plausible distractors for either requested or given information (but not both) appear in a paragraph (including the paragraph in which the answer is located), or distractors arise, as a result of invited inferences based on information in the paragraph in which the answer is located.	2
Plausible distractors for both given and requested information appear in different nodes, one of which may be the paragraph where the answer is located.	3
a) Plausible distractors for both given and requested information appear in the same paragraph but other than the one containing the answer; or, b) distractors represent the opposite condition to what is established in the question or directive, and these distractors appear in a paragraph other than the one containing the answer.	4
a) Plausible distractors for given and requested information both appear in the same paragraph as the answer; or, b) when plausible distractors represent the opposite condition of what is established in the question or directive and these distractors appear in the same paragraph as the answer.	5

Plausibility of Distractors

D Q

Distractors	Rating
No plausible distractors	1
There are multiple items in the list being searched for requested information, or there are labels for other lists that bear resemblence in kind to the label being used as a search term.	2
One or more features from both given and requested information appear in different matrix cells or in lists other than the cell or list in which the answer actually appears.	3
One or more features from both given and requested information appear in the same matrix cell or list but not in the answer node	4
One or more features in from both requested and given information appear in the same matrix cell or list as the answer.	5

The PMOSE/IKIRSCH Document Readability Formula

Structure

Score 1 if *simple-list* structure.

Score 2 if *combined-list* structure.
(also includes pie charts and time lines).

Score 3 if *intersected-list* structure.
(also includes bar charts line graphs and maps).

Score 4 if *nested-list* structure.
(also includes bar charts and line graphs with nested labels).

Document Structure Score _____

Density

Labels Score 1 if 15 or fewer labels.
Score 2 if 16 to 25 labels.
Score 3 if 26 to 35 labels.
Score 4 if 36 to 46 labels.
Score 5 if more than 46 labels.

Number of Labels Score + _____

Score 1 if 75 or fewer items.
Score 2 if 76 to 125 items.
Score 3 if 126 to 175 items.
Score 4 if 176 to 225 items.
Score 5 if more than 225 items.

Number of Items Score + _____

Dependency

Add 1 if document makes reference to information in a related document or as a dependency.

Dependency Score + _____

Total Score = _____

Document Complexity Level

(Circle total score below to determine a documents complexity level)

3 4 5	6 7 8	9 10 11	12 13 14	15
Very Low	**Low**	**Moderate**	**High**	**Very High**

Adapted from: Mosenthal, P. and Kirsch I. (1998). A New Measure for Assessing Document Complexity: The PMOSE/IKIRSCH Document Readability Formula. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 41:8. pp 638-657

Determining IALS Level

When all the processing factors for a task have been rated, they should be totalled and compared with the typical complexity value ranges to estimate an IALS level.

Combined Rating (ToI + ToM + PoD) (ToO + SoO +PoD)	**IALS Level** (Estimate)
0 - 6	**1**
7 - 8	**2**
9 - 10	**3**
11 - 13	**4**
14 - 16	**5**

For Complex Documents

If the document is being considered is unusually complex, rate its complexity using the PMOSE/IKIRSCH Document Readability Formula. Add to the rating for cognitive processing (on all tasks required by the document) according to the following scheme:

If the document's complexity rating is *low* or *very low*, add 0

If the document's complexity is *moderate* or *high*, add 1

If the document's complexity is *very high*, add 2

Notes

In quantitative tasks, it is assumed that the 'type of information' will always be amounts or quantities, so this factor is ignored for these tasks.

If the combined ratings of a task exceed 16, it is clearly off the IALS scale. The IALS scale was calibrated to 'observed' literacy skills among the general population and does not address the extremes of literacy complexity. Undoubtedly there are tasks that can only be completed by people with skills above level 5 (some very small number of Canadians).

Plain Language: The International Pilgrimage

Michel Gauthier

www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/common/home.shtml

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