



THE EASY FINNISH INDICATOR 2.0

The Easy Finnish Indicator is a tool developed for Easy Finnish experts and language researchers to assess whether a text and its layout meet the criteria for Easy Finnish.

The Indicator was developed in the Finnish Centre for Easy Language. It has been tested and developed by experts trained by the Finnish Centre for Easy Language and the Institute for the Languages of Finland.

This is version 2.0 of the Easy Finnish Indicator and it was launched in 2022. The first version of the Indicator was launched in 2018.

The Easy Finnish Indicator is for assessing the easiness of Finnish language texts. Some of the criteria concern the specific characteristics of the Finnish language. As the Indicator has not been tested or used with other languages, there is no detailed knowledge on how it works with languages other than Finnish. For more information on Easy Finnish and other European Easy languages, see Lindholm and Vanhatalo 2021 (oopen.org).

The translation of the Easy Finnish Indicator was funded by Kone Foundation.



Finnish Centre for Easy Language



Finnish Association on Intellectual
and Developmental Disabilities



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What is the Easy Finnish Indicator 2.0

The Easy Finnish Indicator 2.0 is intended for assessing how easy the language of a text is, and its use requires Easy Finnish expertise and general linguistic competence.

The Easy Finnish Indicator 2.0 uses a total of 96 criteria for assessing how easy the language of a text is. They are classed under four subheadings: Text as a whole (27 criteria), Words (16 criteria), Language structures (24 criteria) and Layout and illustrations (29 criteria).

The Indicator isn't suitable as a general guideline for learning Easy Language or producing an easy-language text. Instructions for writing in Easy Finnish and for easy-to-read layout and illustrations can be found on the Finnish Centre for Easy Language website (Selkokeskus.fi) and in theoretical books on Easy Finnish (see e.g., Leskelä 2019: *Selkokieli – Saavutettavan kielen opas* ja Leskelä & Kulkki-Nieminen 2015: *Selkokirjoittajan tekstilajit*).

What kinds of texts can the Indicator assess

The Indicator is best suited to informative texts (e.g., brochures, bulletins, user manuals, informative web texts). The Indicator assesses whether the text is written in a basic level of Easy Finnish.

If the Indicator is used to assess the easiness of the language of other text types (e.g., literary and media texts), it should be noted that not all the criteria are necessarily relevant. The Indicator may also lack some criterion relevant to the Easy Language features of a certain text type. For these reasons, the Indicator's result doesn't necessarily always reliably reflect the easiness of a text's language if it is used to assess texts other than informative texts.

How was the original Indicator improved

The original reason for developing the second version of the Easy Finnish Indicator was to update it to more effectively distinguish Easy Language from standard language. The update made significant changes to the Indicator's grading system. The most essential Easy Finnish criteria are now given more weight in the grading than in the first version of the Indicator. The Easy Finnish Indicator 2.0 also more strongly highlights the specific features of Easy Language in web texts. In addition to these key changes, numerous smaller changes and clarifications have been made to the Indicator to improve its usability.

The improvements made to the Indicator are based on Easy Language research, information and expertise accumulated through practical text work, and user feedback.



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How to use the Easy Finnish Indicator

The Indicator has two types of criteria:

- Main criteria, Grades 0–3
- Other criteria, which are ranked by the letters y (yes, the text meets the criterion) and n (no, the text doesn't meet the criterion).

Carefully read through the text to be assessed and record your assessment in the Indicator's Excel spreadsheet according to the instructions below. Because the Indicator assesses texts written in Finnish, the spreadsheet is in Finnish only.

Reader refers to an Easy Language reader, so evaluate the text from the perspective of whether it is suitable for a reader who needs Easy Language.

After grading, write a brief overall assessment of the text – a summary of how easy the language of the text is. You can make comments, justify the numerical score, and provide examples of the characteristics of the text.

The Easy Finnish Indicator has been developed for use by Easy Finnish researchers and experts. Making an assessment requires Easy Finnish expertise, and the expertise of the assessor always influences the outcome of the assessment.

Grading the main criteria

Grade the main criteria from 0–3, depending on how well the text meets the criteria.

Scale:

- | | |
|----------|------------------------------|
| 3 | fully meets the criteria |
| 2 | partially meets the criteria |
| 1 | poorly meets the criteria |
| 0 | not relevant to this text |

To be called Easy Finnish, all the main criteria must receive a Grade 2 or 3. If any of the main criteria receive a Grade 1, the text isn't in Easy Finnish.



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Other criteria

For other criteria, enter the letter y or n according to how well the text fulfils the criteria.

Scale:

- y** the text meets the criterion
- n** the text doesn't fulfil the criterion
- 0** this criterion isn't relevant to this text.

The spreadsheet calculates the overall grade of a section based on your entries. The main principles for forming an overall grade are summarised below. The weightings vary slightly depending on how many parts of the section are assessed.

Overall rating of section:

- 3** If all or most of the criteria are fulfilled in the text (y)
- 2** If approximately half of the criteria are fulfilled in the text (y/n)
- 1** If none or very few of the criteria are fulfilled in the text (n)
- 0** A section can only be graded 0 if all the parts of the subsection receive a Grade 0. For example, if the text contains no illustration, the illustration section receives an overall grade of 0. Zeros are not included in the average.

Calculating the average

The spreadsheet calculates the average for the whole text as the average of the main criteria and the overall grades of the sections. If you enter 0 in any of the sections, it isn't included in the average.



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When is the text in Easy Finnish

To be called Easy Finnish, all the main criteria must receive a Grade 2 or 3.
If any of the main criteria receive a Grade 1, the text isn't in Easy Finnish.

Average of 2,5 or more:	The text is in Easy Finnish.
Average of 2 to 2,4 :	The text is quite close to Easy Finnish, but still needs work.
Average of 2 or less:	The text isn't in Easy Finnish.



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Basic information on the text:

Text type:	
Publication format:	
Heading:	
Topic:	
Length:	
Readership:	<i>(if defined or apparent)</i>
Publisher:	
Author:	
Assessor:	

Overall assessment of how easy the language of the text is:



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TEXT AS A WHOLE	ASSESSMENT
Main criteria	
1. The language of the text as a whole is assessed as easier than standard language.	
2. The topic is handled from a perspective that is meaningful to the reader.	
3. The topic is dealt with in a concrete, illustrative way, using examples close to everyday life, for instance.	
4. There are no gaps in the content of the text. At every point of the text, the reader receives sufficient information to understand the text.	
5. The text is self-explanatory and doesn't rely too much on the reader's general knowledge or knowledge of other texts.	
Handling of topic and amount of information	
6. The communicative purpose of the text is clear: for example, whether it is trying to influence the reader, pass on information, or to instruct the reader.	
7. The topic is mainly dealt with using concrete agents and people (<i>applicant, police, we</i>). Only a few abstract nouns are agents (<i>the plan concerns, science teaches</i>).	
8. The text contains no irrelevant information.	
9. The text isn't too concise; neither is too much information packed into one clause.	
Overall grade	
Tone of text and interaction with reader	
10. The tone of the text is appropriate for the situation.	
11. The text doesn't underestimate the reader. For example, it doesn't explain too much or isn't too educational. Its language is also suitable for the age level of its target readers.	
12. The text is clearly aimed at the reader; for example, it directly addresses the reader (e.g., pronoun <i>you</i> , second person singular <i>Write</i> or possessive suffix in Finnish <i>nimesi</i> = <i>your name</i>).	



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<p>13. Instructions meant for the reader are expressed clearly and unambiguously. The text linguistically distinguishes between what is mandatory for the reader (<i>must, have to</i>) and what is possible or recommended (<i>may, it's worthwhile</i>). Instructions for the reader are not presented in the passive voice (<i>the form is completed</i>).</p>	
<p>14. Things are described on a general level, or the text addresses the reader indirectly when directly addressing them seems unnatural due to, for example, the style or type of the text, the sensitive topics discussed in the text; or if the text directly addresses the reader too often (<i>Drug test registration can be done online</i>).</p>	
<p>15. The reader isn't too often presented as passive or as needing help; the reader is also an active party.</p>	
<p>Overall grade</p>	

Organization of text

<p>16. The heading and the beginning help the reader get started and grasp the main message of the text.</p>	
<p>17. The text progresses in a consistent manner.</p>	
<p>18. The text is divided into suitably sized sections by, for example, divisions into paragraphs and subheadings.</p>	
<p>19. The paragraphs are interconnected in a natural way, and the text's internal coherence is good. The reader can easily detect the text's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● cause-and-effect relationships (e.g., because, as, for this reason) ● temporal relations (e.g., first, when, after, then) ● conditional relationships (e.g., if-then, however). 	
<p>20. The text's structure helps draw attention to what's essential. Examples of this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● contents table ● informative headings (e.g., consisting of a clause) ● metatext (<i>This brochure presents...</i>) ● lists of points ● pictures and captions ● information or question boxes that bring the text together, highlights. 	



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<p>21. The text doesn't refer to what was said earlier in a way that assumes that the reader will remember or find an earlier part in the text (<i>see picture on page 3</i>).</p>	
<p>22. The use of tenses and time expressions in the text is consistent.</p>	
<p>23. The lists of points are short. The listed items form a whole and are in the same format. For example:</p> <p><i>The employment contract contains:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>duration of employment</i> • <i>possible trial period</i> • <i>working hours</i> • <i>salary</i> • <i>work tasks</i> • <i>holidays</i> 	
<p>Overall grade</p>	

General properties of a good text

<p>24. The text follows the typical characteristics of the type it represents.</p>	
<p>25. The text contains no factual errors.</p>	
<p>26. The text follows the spelling rules of standard language.</p>	
<p>27. The content matches the heading.</p>	
<p>Overall grade</p>	



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WORDS	ASSESSMENT
Main criteria	
28. The text mainly contains general vocabulary evaluated as familiar to the readers.	
29. If a difficult word can't be replaced or avoided, it is explained to the reader in an understandable way that is appropriate to the context.	
30. The text doesn't contain lots of long words.	
31. The text mainly contains concrete words (<i>write, must, hospital</i>).	
32. When repetition is used, it is to make the text more comprehensible. The same thing isn't referred to in too many different ways or using many synonyms.	
Explaining and repeating words	
33. When a supposedly unfamiliar word appears for the first time, it is explained immediately. The explanation doesn't need for further detail. In a long text, the explanation is repeated if necessary.	
34. Words that supposedly familiar to the reader are not explained in the text (<i>a hospital is a place where patients are treated</i>).	
35. The text contains only relevant specialised terms, and they are explained well.	
36. Long compound words are partially repeated after their first mention (<i>Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry > the Ministry</i>).	
37. Whom or what a pronoun refers to is clear, and the pronoun isn't positioned too far away from its reference target.	
Overall grade	



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<i>Familiarity and easy perceptibility of words</i>	
38. The text contains no loanwords if they have a common or native equivalent (<i>connoisseur – expert, specialist; rendez-vous – meeting, appointment; en route – on the way</i>).	
39. Figures of speech are used in moderation. The figures of speech used in the text are familiar, common, and difficult to replace with other words (<i>save time, electric current</i>).	
40. The text contains no figures of speech that require creative reasoning to understand (<i>to chip away at something, brain drain, glass ceiling, eye-catching, road map in the sense of a 'plan'</i>).	
41. The text contains high, precise numerical figures only if this is justified by its topic. If necessary, figures are approximated.	
42. Figures, numbers, units of measure, and relationships between numbers are presented visually.	
43. The text contains no abbreviations or acronyms, except for established ones which are better recognized as abbreviations than if written out in full (<i>PDF, DVD</i>).	
<i>Overall grade</i>	



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LANGUAGE STRUCTURES	ASSESSMENT
Main criteria	
44. The text doesn't contain many language structures rated difficult.	
45. Clauses and sentences are mainly short.	
46. Each clause contains only one important point.	
47. Nouns don't have complex modifiers such as participle structures, which are typical in the Finnish language (<i>people having left the country; materials related to the training, instructions given by your doctor</i>).	
48. The text contains no non-finite clauses phrases or other non-finite structures, which are typical in the Finnish language (<i>In order to participate, the student must register in advance. If you want your health examined, get in touch. The teacher is the person to ask about that</i>).	

Inflections and derivatives	
49. The text uses the basic forms of nouns if it is possible and natural in the context.	
50. The text mainly contains the easiest forms of noun inflections. The text contains no rare cases such as the abessive (usually translated into English as <i>without (tauotta = without pausing)</i>), the comitative (case to denote with whom or what an action occurs (<i>lähetin dokumentin liitteineen = I sent the document and its attachments</i>)), or the instructive case (expressing the means or instrument used to perform an action (<i>pienin muutoksin = through small changes</i>)).	
51. The text contains no words that have several different elements, such as derivative affixes, inflectional suffixes, and clitics (e.g., in English as <i>I understand it would be one word in Finnish, ymmärtääkseni; or those that you protected would be puolustamiesi</i>).	
52. Verbs are mainly in the simple present tense (<i>you send</i>) and the simple past tense (<i>you sent</i>). The present perfect and the past perfect (<i>you have sent, you had sent</i>) is only used if the temporal relations of the text so demand.	



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<p>53. Moods used are mostly the indicative (<i>I listen, we speak</i>), and the second person imperative (<i>listen, speak</i>). The text doesn't contain rare verb moods such as the potential (which expresses probability – this is very rare in Finnish and doesn't exist in English: e.g., <i>Hän valmistanee pian ruokaa</i> – <i>she'll probably cook soon</i>, and the archaic third person imperative, meaning <i>just let him/her/them + verb = tehkään</i> - <i>let him/her/them do it</i>).</p>	
<p>54. The conditional is only used if it can't be replaced by an indicative without the clearly changing the meaning. In Finnish, the conditional marker is <i>-isi</i>, and normally translates as <i>could</i> or <i>would</i> (e.g., <i>Haluaisin, I would like to</i>).</p>	
<p>Overall grade</p>	

Phrases and sentence structures

<p>55. Nouns don't have multiple modifiers in one clause (<i>Getting sick can be a serious, dangerous, and frightening thing</i>).</p>	
<p>56. Words that belong together (as in verb + verb constructions and verb rection-based expressions (when certain verbs require the usage of a specific case for words connected to it)), are presented sequentially or as closely as possible to each other (this is similar to how some verbs in English take a specific preposition, e.g., <i>to arrive at the station, to be interested in something</i>).</p>	
<p>57. The text mainly contains clauses that are structured on the basis of a finite verb (<i>Return the form in time. We reply to messages on Mondays.</i>).</p>	
<p>58. The text doesn't contain nominal style expressions (overuse of nouns, e.g., <i>government spending showed positive growth</i> instead of <i>the government spent more</i>).</p>	
<p>59. Despite the Finnish language having no rigid grammatical word order, the text uses direct word order, i.e., subject, verb, object. Inversion is only used when the structure of the text so requires, or if not doing so would make the text monotonous.</p>	
<p>60. The predicate is located at the beginning of the clause.</p>	



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61. The text only contains the passive when the agent is unknown or when mentioning the agent is irrelevant (<i>The presidential elections are held every six years. The house was built in the 1920s.</i>)	
62. Clauses don't contain double negatives (<i>Bills must not be left unpaid.</i>)	
Overall grade	

Sentence structures

63. Sentence structures are simple. For the most part, they only have one subordinate clause.	
64. In sentences, the main clause and the subordinate clause are in a logical order in terms of how the text progresses.	
65. In sentences, the clauses are bound together by conjunctions, (<i>because, but, as</i>) so that the relationship between the two items is clear.	
66. The text contains no structures in which a subordinate clause is in the middle of the main clause, as opposed to the beginning or end (<i>You can apply for services, of which accommodation services and elderly services are examples, by filling in this form.</i>)	
67. Sentences don't contain complex negative relationships (<i>You will not pass the course if you don't submit the assignment.</i>)	
Overall grade	



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LAYOUT AND ILLUSTRATION	ASSESSMENT
Main criteria	
68. The general appearance of the publication is clear and more perceivable than a general language publication.	
69. The order in which the text is to be read is clear. The reader can easily understand how to proceed with the text.	
70. Images and their emotional message are consistent with and help the reader understand the main message of the text.	
71. The images are high quality and clear. What is depicted in the picture is easy to perceive and identify.	
72. Printed text (including PDF files) is lined up according to Easy Finnish principles, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it is best if the sentence starts at the beginning of the line • words related to each other (phrases) are in the same line. 	
73. The main content is easy to identify, and attention is drawn to it. The publication or web page doesn't contain too many different elements in addition to the actual text content.	
Font and font size	
74. The publication doesn't use any special, unusually formatted, or otherwise difficult-to-read fonts (e.g., too narrow, too thin, or a font that varies in thickness).	
75. The publication only uses a few different fonts to keep the overall appearance of the text clear.	
76. Italics or bold are only used in short highlights. Capitals are only used in short sections. For the most part, the text is in the lower case.	
77. The font size is sufficiently large, for example, 12 to 16 points in the body text.	
78. Line spacing is sufficient, letters don't touch each other.	
Overall grade	



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Perceptibility	
79. The text has a monochrome background and isn't directly on top of the picture.	
80. The darkness contrast between the text and the background is sufficient, i.e., the background is light, and the text is dark. In web texts, sufficient contrast means contrast that is in accordance with the WCAG accessibility criteria.	
81. The hierarchy of the text is clear, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • headings are clearly distinguishable from the body text • the main heading stands out from the subheadings • captions are close to the picture. 	
82. The layout is spacious. There's enough empty space between different elements (paragraphs, headings, text, columns, images, captions, navigation, etc.).	
83. The left edge of the text is aligned, the right edge is ragged. Syllables are not hyphenated (as is common in children's Finnish texts for example).	
Overall grade	

Illustrations	
84. Illustrations are in line the publication format and take into account the different ways of reading different publication formats (e.g., printed text, web page).	
85. The purpose of the picture (e.g., to convey information, to create a mood, to provided symbol support) is suitable for the communicative purpose of the text.	
86. The illustrations take into account the reader; for example, a publication aimed at adults has illustrations suitable for adults.	
87. The positioning of the images helps comprehension of the text.	
88. The illustrations present their object from a typical angle; unusual angles have been avoided.	
89. The illustrations are cropped so that what is essential for the communicative purpose stands out clearly. Unnecessary and irrelevant items have been faded or cropped out.	
90. Captions help the reader understand the images and connect the image to the content of the text.	



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<p>91. Symbols are easily recognizable and are used in their typical sense. Information isn't only based on a symbol; it is followed by text if necessary (e.g., in the search function of a web page, the magnifying glass symbol is accompanied by the word <i>Search</i>).</p>	
<p>Overall grade</p>	

<p><i>Special features of web text layout</i></p>	
<p>92. The column is narrow.</p>	
<p>93. The text is easy to skim and has paragraphs and subheadings that make it easier to skim through.</p>	
<p>94. If the text is lined up in accordance with Easy Language principles (forced line breaks), the word wrap doesn't get jumbled up even on small screens, such as a phone.</p>	
<p>95. Any links in the text offer the user relevant, comprehensible further information.</p>	
<p>96. The links stand out from the rest of the content and are marked in a way that isn't used in the rest of the content.</p>	
<p>Overall grade</p>	

<p>The average for the whole text</p>	
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