

Using Word's readability checking, here's what I got (using Word 2007....you numbers may differ slightly). It's written at a 11.8 grade level.

Counts	
Words	255
Characters	1314
Paragraphs	1
Sentences	15
Averages	
Sentences per Paragraph	15.0
Words per Sentence	17.0
Characters per Word	5.0
Readability	
Passive Sentences	33%
Flesch Reading Ease	40.2
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	11.8

Paragraph on gas-operated refrigerators (also linked from the web page)

If you own a cabin or a recreational vehicle you may already be familiar with the gas-operated refrigerator. Science has enabled the public to achieve refrigeration without the use of electricity. This can be invaluable in more rustic situations. Gas refrigerators are not feasibly repairable on site, but are usually built for longevity. Since one of the main reactions in the cycle of cooling involves ammonia absorption, the refrigerator is sometimes referred to as an absorption refrigerator. The purpose of this piece is to inform the reader about the molecular reactions that create cold in a gas refrigerator, and the parts creating these reactions. Gas fuel is the source of energy used to trigger the process. Heat initiates a chemical reaction that ultimately results in the absorption of liquid ammonia into a newly formed gas. This refrigerator discussed here, unlike an electric unit, has no parts that move at all. Refrigeration is achieved through means of heating and condensing of ammonia with water and ammonia with hydrogen. A gas flame is used to heat a mixture that creates a chemical reaction resulting in liquid ammonia's evaporation, which creates cold. The refrigerator is built in a way that a continuous cycle results. As long as gas fuel is present to fire the burner, the process is self-contained. This aspect is the reason they are still used today in situations where electricity is not readily available. The following will explain in detail both the molecular and mechanical processes that result in the cooling of a gas refrigerator.

Assignment

1. Rewrite the gas-operated refrigerator paragraph twice. Once so it has a 8th grade level and once so it has a 5th grade level.

The overall content cannot change, although

- You may have to replace some words with shorter/simpler ones
 - Sentences will have to be broken up so they are shorter.
2. Write a description for each new paragraph that explains the type of changes you had to make to reduce the grade level. How did the change affect other readability scores? Use both Word's tools and a few online readability checkers. How do the results vary between them? Do the results of different methods give consistent results?
 3. Report on a short readability test. Ask a 3-4 friends to read the three texts and rank them in order of preference about the information clarity. In other words, which ones they think read the best, which communicates the content the best, and which they prefer. Don't tell them the grade levels or other details about the assignment; they should just be handed the three paragraphs and asked the ranking questions.