

# READING PRACTICE AND PREPARATION FOR THE CATW

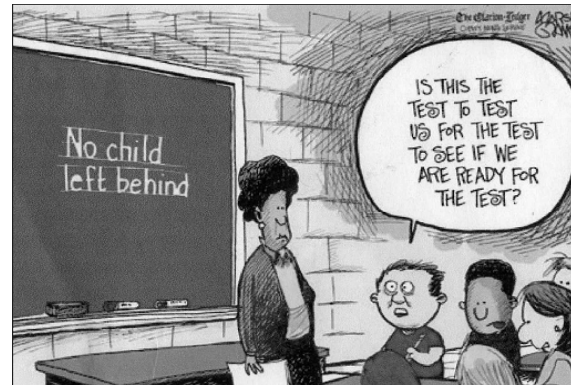
## -- CUNY ASSESSMENT TEST IN WRITING --

This document is for instructor use only.

Although this is the CUNY Assessment Test in Writing, this is also very much a reading exam. The first category of the five criteria domains evaluates students' understanding and "critical analysis" of the given passage. This exam, therefore, not only values the relationship between reading and writing, but . In order to develop students' writing skills, we must take a serious and pragmatic look at their reading skills. As stated in the handbook, likely reading passages will fall under disciplines of sociology, psychology, technology, pop culture, etc.

For the list below, reading levels are based on the Flesch- Kincaid Readability Score<sup>1</sup>. (Your opinion may disagree with the recorded level. Use your best judgment.) Do not be discouraged by readability scores that are labeled too low or too high. These too will present different types of challenges for students to gain good practice and skills in reading and writing. (Note: "H.Ed" = College level or "13<sup>th</sup>" or "14<sup>th</sup>" on the Flesch-Kincaid rubric). Articles below have been collected from faculty and staff members across CUNY Community campuses. All of the articles have been edited in some way for the anticipated student reader. Please be aware, as we edit materials, we alter the level of reading difficulty (or ease).

It is important for instructors to be aware of readability for general lesson planning; however, this information should not be shared with students. (We would not want a student who struggles with a labeled "7<sup>th</sup> grade" passage to feel discouraged.) Readability is evaluated on vocabulary and sentence complexity; not necessarily level of critical thinking implicit or explicitly in the passage.) The CUNY CAT-W exam is based on a 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade reading level and students should be informed when a practice reading is more difficult than the exam may present. In addition, a number of the readings below exceed the expected word count for the exam (250-300 words); however, these articles are still viable texts for reading and writing practice.



<sup>1</sup> The Flesch-Kincaid Readability Score, also known as "The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability Formula", was originally created in 1948 and later revised in 1976 by the US Navy and used by the US Army for evaluating technical manuals. Over the decades, this readability formula was applied to various manuals, documents, programs, MS-Word, and currently indicates the reading-level for most textbooks, such as the Mosaics series. The formula evaluates the total sentences, sentence length, total words and total syllables. The exact equation, explanation and example of The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability Formula can be found at [http://www.idph.state.ia.us/health\\_literacy/common/pdf/tools/flesch\\_kincaid.pdf](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/health_literacy/common/pdf/tools/flesch_kincaid.pdf). You may also use the following website to provide you a Flesch-Kincaid Readability Score <http://www.standards-schmandards.com/exhibits/rix/>, or set your MS-Word settings to provide the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Score at the end of a grammar check.

## READING PASSAGES BY THEME FOR CATW PRACTICE & IN-CLASS LESSONS

The charts below are organized by theme. The details in each column are as follows:

TITLE	AUTHOR	ORIGINAL PUBLICATION	PUB. YR.	WORD COUNT	GRADE LEVEL	LESSON NOTES
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### Health Topics – Mental & Physical Wellbeing / Personal Knowledge

“Do We Really Think”	Henry Ford	“My Philosophy of Business,” <i>Forum Publishing Co</i>	1928	382	6 <sup>th</sup>	
“Does Stress Validate Our Existence?”	Julie Gray	<i>The Huffington Post.com</i>	2011	512	6 <sup>th</sup>	
“How Listening Can Enrich You”	Ann Naylor	<i>The Huffington Post.com</i>	2011	491	7 <sup>th</sup>	
“P.L.A.Y.N.O.W.: How to Bring Mindfulness into Your Life”	Elisha Goldstein	<i>The Huffington Post.com</i>	2011	1,143	8 <sup>th</sup>	
“Living With Mistakes”	David Brooks	New York Times	2011	291	8 <sup>th</sup>	
“BEWARE: Sneaky Liquid Calories”	Carrie Wiatt	<i>The Huffington Post.com</i>	2011	491	9 <sup>th</sup>	
“Is Music a Good Tool for Health?”	Elizabeth Scott	<i>About.com</i>	2009	255	10 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Student essays available with scores.</i>
“How to Do One Thing at a Time”		<i>Women’s Health Magazine</i>	2010	245	10 <sup>th</sup>	<i>See student handbook.</i>
“Fast Food Is Fat Food”	Chelsea Durbin	<i>The University Daily Kansan</i>	2007	278	10 <sup>th</sup>	
“Life Has No Meaning: So What?”	Will Wlizlo	<i>The Utne Reader</i>	2010	192	11 <sup>th</sup>	
“Fruit Loopiness”	Katherine Schreiber	<i>Psychology Today.</i>	2011	270	11 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Students may struggle with this article due to vocabulary.</i>
“The Food Industry is Not to Blame for Obesity”	Pierce Hollingsworth		2006	720	H.Ed	

“Modern Society and the Quest for Human Happiness”	The Dalai Lama	<i>Write to be Read</i>		242	H.Ed	
“How Meditation May Change the Brain”	Sindya N. Bhanoo	<i>The New York Times</i>	2011	300	H.Ed	
“A True Instinct for the Beautiful”	Rachel Carson	<i>The Sense of Wonder</i>	1956	280	H.Ed	

## Social Dynamics

“What You Do is What You Are”	Nickie McWhiter			308	7 <sup>th</sup>	
“One Mother’s Blast At Motherhood”	Shirley L. Radl	<i>Life</i>	1972	228	8 <sup>th</sup>	
“How Your Birth Order Influences Your Life Adjustment”	Lucille Forer	<i>Write to be Read</i>		290	9 <sup>th</sup>	
“Individuals in Groups”		<i>From “In Groups We Shrink” - LA Times</i>	1991	282	9 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Student essays available with scores</i>
“Solve that Problem with Humor”	William D. Ellis	<i>Reader’s Digest</i>	1973	260	10 <sup>th</sup>	
“A Post-Air-Conditioning World”	Lenore Iskenazy	<i>Free-Range Kids – Word Press Blog</i>	2011	246	10 <sup>th</sup>	<i>A good reading lesson for focusing on the main idea. Students are easily tricked/misled by the minor details.</i>
“A Functional Family, Just Outside Your Door”	Margret Aldrich	<i>The Utne Reader</i>	2011	300	11 <sup>th</sup>	
“Only Children’s Happiness”		<i>The Week.com</i>	2010	294	12 <sup>th</sup>	
“Trusting Families to Help Themselves”	David Bornstein	<i>New York Times</i>	2011	317	12 <sup>th</sup>	
“Selfishness and a Happy Marriage”		<i>The Week.com</i>	2011	289	H.Ed	

## Education

“Why I’m Raising My Son to Be a Nerd”	LZ Granderson	<i>CNN Opinion</i>	2011	827	8 <sup>th</sup>	
“Why would-be engineers end up as English majors”	Assia Boundaoui,	<i>CNN in America</i>	2011	1,209	10 <sup>th</sup>	
“Elementary Students Encouraged to Set College Goals: Schools Try to Establish a College-Going Culture”	Caralee J. Adams	<i>Education Week.</i>	2010	282	10 <sup>th</sup>	
“Writing By Hand and Kids’ Development”		<i>The Week.com</i>	2010	298	10 <sup>th</sup>	
“College, Jobs and Inequality”		<i>The New York Times</i>	2010	294	H.Ed	
“Community-College Students Perform Worse Online Than Face to Face”	Ryan Brown	<i>The Chronicle of Higher Education</i>	2011	300	H.Ed.	

## Media - Entertainment / Technology

“Is Google Making Us Stupid”	Nicholas Carr	<i>The Atlantic</i>	2008	262	7 <sup>th</sup>	
“How Deeply Connected are you?”	Viral Mehta	<i>The Huffington Post.com</i>	2011	883	10 <sup>th</sup>	
“Protecting Online Privacy”		<i>The New York Times</i>	2010	293	12 <sup>th</sup>	

## Gender

“How to Talk to Little Girls”	Lisa Bloom	<i>The Huffington Post.com</i>	2011	859	6 <sup>th</sup>	
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“Are Men What They Used to Be?”	Peggy Drexler	<i>The Huffington Post.com</i>	2011	291	10 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Students may struggle with this article due to vocabulary.</i>
“The Male Shift”	Hanna Rosin	<i>Atlantic Monthly</i>	2010	290	11 <sup>th</sup>	
“Do Great Mothers Make Great Leaders?”	Keli Goff	<i>The Huffington Post.com</i>	2011	347	H.Ed	

### Culture (Ways of living / Community / Economy / Race / etc...)

“The Fear of Losing A Culture”	Richard Rodriguez	<i>TIME</i>	1988	941	9 <sup>th</sup>	
“Hype”	Kelle Larsn	<i>Signs of Life in the USA: Readings on Popular Culture for Writers.</i>	2003	271	9 <sup>th</sup>	<i>See Faculty/Student handbook. Student essays available with scores.</i>
“Reading Underground”	Alexis Mainland	<i>New York Times</i>	2009	404	9 <sup>th</sup>	
“Learning Influences Our Food choices”	Thompson and Monroe	<i>Nutrition of Life</i>		250	9 <sup>th</sup>	
“Materialism: Our Consuming Interest”	Linda Kulman	<i>U.S. News &amp; World Report</i>	2004	303	10 <sup>th</sup>	
“Red, White and Blue... and Many Other Colors”	Marlo Thomas	<i>The Huffington Post.com</i>	2011	285	10 <sup>th</sup>	
“Suffer the Little Children”	Charles M. Bow	<i>The New York Times</i>	2010	299	11 <sup>th</sup>	
“Earth Day”		<i>New York Times</i>	2010	296	H.Ed.	
“Corporation Days”	David Schimke	<i>The Utne Reader</i>	2010	267	H.Ed.	<i>According to the Flesh-Kincaid Readability Score, this</i>

						ranks at a "19.1" level. (?!)
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**Debates / Hot Topics**

"Beauty Discrimination During a Job Search"	Tara Parker-Pope.	<i>New York Times – Health</i>	2010	277	11 <sup>th</sup>	
"You Only Better"	Christine Rosen	<i>New Atlantis</i>	2004	219	11 <sup>th</sup>	
"Why Are Gay Men So Feared"	Dennis Altman	<i>The New International.</i>	1989	243	12 <sup>th</sup>	
Bicycle Safety		(old CPE-Task 2 practice prompt)		239	H.Ed	<i>(Presented without the accompanying charts from the CPE. Although, using the charts may provide variation for teaching lessons.)</i>

**Misc. (Journalism / Unlikely exam topics)**


*(Articles to edit and add to list above)*

- "Can a Playground Be too Safe" By John Tierney – July 2011 – NYTimes
- Celebrity Adoptions
- "Generation FB"
- "Online K-12"
- Teenagers and sunburn
- Horror films
- "United States of Narcissim" By Daniel Altman –
- See Writing Center passages.