



**CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR
2004 PROJECT SUMMARY**

Name(s) Kevin C. Gietzel	Project Number J1209
Project Title Have Popular Books Changed to Use Simpler Language over the Past Century?	
<p style="text-align: center;">Abstract</p> <p>Objectives/Goals I had a hypothesis that older books were more complex than more modern ones. My goal was to learn whether the length of a book's sentences, words, and paragraphs had decreased over the years. I believed that if sentences, words and paragraphs had decreased, then books had become easier to read.</p> <p>Methods/Materials I used a computer and ten library books. I typed in an excerpt from each of these books and then used a program to collect my data.</p> <p>Results I found that the word lengths of books had not really changed over the past century. Paragraph length also changed little. Sentence length had no discernible pattern.</p> <p>Conclusions/Discussion I decided that my research was flawed either by the limited sample or that best selling books had not changed over the past century while regular books had. It was also a possibility that old books used words of similar length even though these words were more complex.</p>	
Summary Statement My project is about how and whether books have become more complex in writing style over the past century.	
Help Received My mother and father drove me to the library; they each typed an excerpt; received input on how to revise report.	