

# Key Stage Two Accelerated Reader at



## A Guide for Parents/Carers

## What is Accelerated Reader (AR)?

AR is a computer program that helps teachers manage and monitor children's independent reading practice. Your child picks a book at his/her own level and reads it at his/her own pace. When finished, your child takes a short quiz on the computer. Passing the quiz is an indication that your child has understood what they have read.

Children can see how they scored on the quiz and where they answered the questions incorrectly. The program enables them to see their progress towards the half-termly targets. Children using AR have a free choice of the books they read (within their ZPD), which makes reading a much more enjoyable experience.

Staff in school will help your child choose books that are at an appropriate reading level. These will be challenging but will also be at a level at which your child can experience success.

If your child does not pass the quiz, the teacher may assist him/her by:

- Helping choose another book that is more appropriate
- Asking more probing questions as your child reads and before he/she takes a quiz

In most cases, children really enjoy taking the quizzes. Since they are reading books at their own reading and interest levels, they are likely to be successful. This is satisfying for most children. Best of all they learn and grow at their own pace.



## Is this how reading is assessed in school?

No. A 'book level' or 'reading age' does not enable an accurate assessment of reading to be made. Through reading tasks in English and through guided reading, the teacher will assess children's reading ability:

- to decode print (to know what a words say) to sound out*
- to use the context of the writing to tackle unknown words,*
- to vary intonation appropriately when reading)*
- to understand what they have read (to know what the words mean)*
- to make predictions about a story,*
- to ask and answer questions about what has been read*
- to discuss words and phrases that engage the reader*

AR provides an additional tool for teachers to use in informing this judgement. For more information about how the school assesses reading, please see your child's class teacher.

## How much should my child read during the school day?

According to research, children who read at least 20 minutes a day with a 90% comprehension rate on AR quizzes see the greatest gains. In class, time will be set aside for reading independently and we encourage children to spend 20 minutes reading at home as part of their weekly homework.

## How can I help my child become a better reader?



As with anything, performance improves with practice so encourage your child to read at home. Create a culture of reading in your household by reading with your child, starting a home library, visiting your local library or bookshop on a regular basis and by letting your child see you reading. When reading with your child, ask questions to be sure they comprehend what they have read. By making a habit of discussing books that each of you has read, children will develop a love of reading

## How does the school determine my child's reading level on AR? What is a STAR Reading test?

Your child's reading level is determined using a STAR Reading test. STAR Reading is a computer based reading assessment, where questions continually adjust to your child's responses. If the child's response is correct, the difficulty level is increased. If the child cannot answer a question or answers incorrectly, the difficulty level is reduced. The test uses multiple-choice questions and takes approximately 20 minutes.

### What is a Book Level?

Once they have completed the Little Wandle Fluency programme, every child undertakes the initial 'Star Reading' assessment, which provides them with a reading age, reading level and a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) range. Children choose a book on a level within their range. To enable children to easily find accessible books, every AR book in school has been labelled with a Book Level. A child's ZPD range changes during the year depending on their 'Star Reading' assessment, which will be undertaken at the end of each term.

### Is it OK for my child to read outside of their reading level?

Yes – this is fine. However, just because a child can read the words in a book does not mean the content is appropriate. The Interest Level, based on the content (a book's themes and ideas) indicates for which age group a book is appropriate.

LY—Lower Years age 5-7      MY—Middle Years age 7-11      UY—Upper Years High School

If there is a book that is not on the Accelerated Reader system, or there is a book that sits outside their ZPD range, and they would really like to read it, we will not discourage children in doing so, but suggest that they read it alongside a book within their ZPD range.

### What are points?

The most exciting part of the Accelerated Reader program is the quizzes that it provides. When your child has finished a book, they can take a quiz to test their comprehension skills. These quizzes can be accessed either at home, or during the school day (registration time, playtimes etc.) and require either a computer or tablet.

Every book that has an AR Reading Practice Quiz is given a points value. AR points are based on the difficulty of the book (readability level) and the length of the book (number of words).

Children earn points on a pro rata basis depending on how well they do on the Reading Practice Quiz. For example, a pupil who takes a 5- question quiz on a book worth 1 point will earn 1 point for 5 correct answers (100%), 0.8 point for 4 correct answers (80%) and so on. A pupil who reads a book worth 5

points and takes a 10-question quiz will earn 5 points for 10 correct answers (100%) 4.5 points for 9 correct answers (90%), etc. A child needs to pass a quiz with a score of 60% or higher to earn points.

### **My child is not a strong reader. Can he/she still use Accelerated Reader?**

Accelerated Reader helps all children become better readers regardless of their reading ability. When children read books at their appropriate level, they develop fluency and experience success.

### **How are Accelerated Reader point targets set?**

The Target-Setting Chart provides guidelines for the approximate number of AR points children should be able to earn depending on how much time they read and their reading level. Monitoring AR points earned by children and comparing them to the guideline values listed on the Target-Setting Chart enables your child's teacher to determine how well your child is using the time provided for reading practice.

### **How will I know if a book has an AR quiz?**

There are over 11,000 AR quizzes available and more being written every month so there are plenty of books available. You can visit the AR BookFinder at [www.arbookfind.co.uk](http://www.arbookfind.co.uk) to conduct a search of all available books with AR quizzes.

### **How can I help my child find books that they find interesting?**

Visit [www.arbookfind.co.uk](http://www.arbookfind.co.uk) and click on Advanced Search. By conducting an advanced search, you will be able to generate book lists that contain titles based on the criteria you enter such as Book Level, Topic, Interest Level and Fiction/Non-fiction, etc.



### **Can my child take quizzes at home?**

Yes! Children can access AR quizzes from home between the hours of 8am and 8pm.

### **How will I know how my child is doing?**

A TOPS Report prints automatically after a child takes a quiz to give feedback on your child's understanding of the book and shows data for the marking period and school year. Parents are able to access their child's AR information in Renaissance Place Home Connect from any web-enabled computer or tablet by using the following link and entering your child's AR login details:

<https://Ukhosted32.renlearn.co.uk/2235694/HomeConnect/>

Once in the program, you can view your child's progress towards targets, points and books read. You can set up the system to automatically receive emails each time your child takes a quiz. You can also access AR BookFinder to search for titles of interest. You can only access information about your own child.

