

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 their own level and reads it at their own pace. When finished, your child takes a short quiz on the computer (the quiz score will indicate whether your child understood what was read.) AR gives children and teacher's feedback based on the quiz results, which the teacher then uses to help your child set targets to help continually improve their reading.

Children using AR choose their own books to read, rather than having one assigned to them. This makes reading a much more enjoyable experience as they can choose books that are interesting to them.

Teachers may help your child by:

- Choosing books at an appropriate readability level that are challenging without being frustrating
- Ask more probing questions as your child reads and before your child takes a quiz
- Pair your child with another pupil, or even have the book read to your child.

Since they're reading books at their reading and interest levels, they are likely to be successful and enjoy taking the quizzes. Best of all, they learn and grow at their own pace.

AR will help to ensure that the children's independent reading practice is appropriate and effective.

How much should my child read each day?

According to research, children who read at least 20 minutes a day with a 90% comprehension rate (average percentage correct) on AR quizzes see the greatest gains.

How can I help my child become a better reader?

As with anything, performance improves with practice. 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, letting your child see you reading and discussing books that each of you have read. When reading with your child, stop and ask questions to be sure your child is comprehending what is read. Reading with your child, no matter what the child's age, is an important part of developing a good reader, building a lifelong love of reading and learning and creating a loving relationship between you and your child. Make learning a family affair!

What if my child does not like reading?

Using Accelerated Reader, your child will choose the books they want to read. The teacher will make certain the book is at the right level so that after completing the book, your child should do well on the AR Reading Practice Quiz. Success on the quiz will encourage your child to read more.

I am concerned that my child will be unfairly compared to others.

AR helps the teacher work with each child individually. Students using AR are encouraged to progress at their own pace and set their own targets with the help of the teacher. The aim of AR is for all children to succeed in achieving their targets.

How does the school determine my child's reading level?

Teachers determine your child's reading level in three ways:

- STAR Reading test
- A reading age estimation from previous assessment scores
- Using his/her best professional judgment based on his/her knowledge of your child.

What is a STAR Reading test?

STAR Reading is a computer-based reading assessment program that uses computer adaptive technology.

What does this mean?

Children are presented with questions, which require a multiple-choice answer. 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 whole test takes approximately 10 minutes and is never an ordeal. A report gives an 'ATOS' reading level for each child which, alongside all the assessment information that we already have, helps the teachers to determine an appropriate reading range for your child.

What is a Book Level?

Book Levels are reported using the ATOSTM readability formula and represent the difficulty of the text. The levels range from 0.5–13.5. The levelling criteria covers such factors as vocabulary, average word length, average sentence length, grammatical complexity etc. – not how long the book is or how many pictures it contains!

Normally, books are chosen between a range of levels (the child's Zone of Proximal Development) recommended for each pupil by STAR. The books in the library are then levelled so children can easily find books in their reading range.

What is a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)?

In independent literature-based reading, ZPD is the range of books that will challenge a child without causing frustration or loss of motivation. Your child will receive a ZPD range after taking a STAR Reading test; teachers can also use their best professional judgment to determine a ZPD. It's important for children to read with a high degree of comprehension and within their ZPDs. During

the year we would expect to see an increase in the ZPD ranges as your child begins to read more and make progress in their reading ability.

What are points?

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

The point value of our books is indicated on a label inside the book cover. 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 points 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 any points.

How will I know how my child is doing?

Your child's progress in the quizzes and their reading age will be reported through parents' evenings, or you can talk to your child's teacher if you have any queries.