



Parent's Guide to Accelerated Reader™ QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



Our Key Stage 2 pupils participate in the Accelerated Reader (AR™) program. This guide is designed to answer your questions about AR. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact your child's teacher or visit the Accelerated Reader Website at www.renlearn.co.uk

In Year 3 it does take some time for us to train the children in how to use the system. They also need an introductory assessment before we can allocate reading books from this system, and this is dependent on transferring information about the Year 3 pupils onto the system. Whilst we are setting this up, training the pupils in the system and assessing their book level the Year 3 team continue to provide books and hear pupils read in the same manner as Key Stage 1.

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 understood what was read.) AR gives both children and teachers feedback based on the quiz results, which the teacher then uses to help your child set targets and direct ongoing reading practice. 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.

What does a quiz look like?



Teachers will help your child choose books at an appropriate reading level that are challenging without being frustrating, ensuring that your child can pass the quiz and experience success.

If your child does not do well on a quiz, the teacher may help him/her:

- Choose another book that is more appropriate.
- Ask more probing questions as your child reads and before taking a quiz.
- Pair your child with another pupil, or even have the book read to your child.

In most cases, children really enjoy taking the quizzes. Since they are reading books at their 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.

How much should my child read during the day?

According to research, children who read at least 35 minutes a day with a 90% comprehension rate (average percentage correct) on AR quizzes see the greatest gains. Within the classroom we will continue to use our usual teaching strategies such as guided, group and whole class reading for a variety of purposes, which is separate from Accelerated Reader.

Therefore, we encourage child will have at least 20 minutes a day set aside for reading at home during Years 3 & 4, building up to at least 30 minutes by Year 5 onwards. The more children read, the quicker they will progress.

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 is more likely to choose the books he/she wants 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. With guidance from the teacher and success, even pupils who say they do not like reading will develop a love of reading.

Will my child have to read a book I do not want him/her to read?

No. There are many choices of books at your child's level. He/she will never be forced to read a book you find questionable.

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

Then you will really like AR because it helps the teacher work with each child individually. Pupils 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 by using the information from a STAR Reading™ test and their best professional judgment based on their knowledge of your child.

What is a STAR Reading test?

STAR Reading is a computerised reading assessment that uses computer-adaptive technology. Questions continually adjust to your child's responses. If the child's response to a question is correct, the difficulty level of the next question is increased. If the child misses a question, the difficulty level of the next question is reduced. The test uses multiple choice questions and takes approximately 10 minutes.

What is a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)?

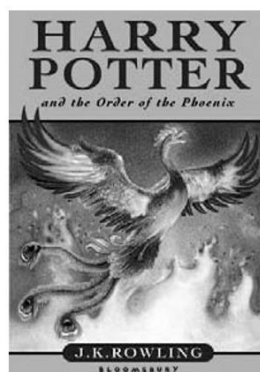
In independent literature-based reading, ZPD is the range of books that will challenge a child without causing frustration or loss of motivation. Your child will receive a ZPD range after taking a STAR Reading test or teachers can use their best professional judgment to determine a ZPD. It is important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

What are points?

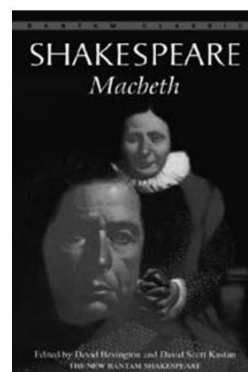
Every book that has an AR Reading Practice Quiz is given a point value. AR points are computed based on the difficulty of the book and the length of the book (number of words).

Children earn points, or a portion of a book's points, depending on how well they do on the Reading Practice Quiz. For example, a child 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%), etc. A child 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.

You may notice that some popular books have more points assigned to them than some classic pieces of literature. J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, for example, is a 44-point book while Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is a 4-point book. Keep in mind that this does not mean we think *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* is a better book or more worthwhile to read than *Macbeth*, only that—at 257,154 words versus 19,048 words—it is much longer and provides more reading practice time.



44 pt. (257,154 words)



4 pt. (19,048 words)

How are Accelerated Reader point targets set?

Once pupils have got to grips with the process of using Accelerated Reader teachers will set points targets that encourage participation in reading activities and support developing comprehension skills.

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. Pupils' STAR Reading scores are accessible in Accelerated Reader, making it easier for teachers to set point targets for pupils. These targets will be shared with parents.

How many Accelerated Reader quizzes are there?

There are over 27,000 AR quizzes available, with more being written every month.

What kinds of quizzes are there?

Accelerated Reader includes several types of quizzes designed to support the development of several reading skills. Quiz types include:

- **Reading Practice Quizzes** are the most common type of assessment in AR. The purpose of these quizzes is to determine whether your child has read a book, to measure your child's literal comprehension of the book and to provide immediate feedback. Each Reading Practice Quiz consists of 5, 10 or 20 multiple-choice questions depending on book level and length.
- **Recorded Voice Quizzes** are designed for beginning readers and pupils learning English. They are professionally recorded by a narrator who reads the quiz questions and answer choices as they appear on screen.
- **Vocabulary Practice Quizzes** measure a child's command of vocabulary words encountered while reading. They are designed to reinforce vocabulary acquisition, assist with individualising vocabulary instruction and generate your child's interest in words through authentic, in-context literature experiences. Quizzes include 5, 10 or 15 words from a particular book as well as review words from previously read books.
- **Literacy Skills Quizzes** are designed to give your child's teacher information on specific reading skills. Questions are randomly generated from a 36- or 60-item bank, resulting in 12 or 24 quiz questions. Due to item-bank technology, Literacy Skills Quizzes can be taken up to three times. Quiz questions are based on 24 specific, higher-order reading comprehension skills.

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

We recognise many children enjoy reading books from home or the library to supplement their school reading books. Many of these books have quizzes to assess comprehension and so can be used as part of the Accelerated Reader. If you want to check whether a book has a quiz please visit the AR BookFinder™ at www.arbookfind.co.uk to conduct a search of all available books with AR quizzes.

How can I help my child find books that are interesting to him or her?

Visit www.arbookfind.co.uk and click Advanced Search. By conducting an advanced search, you can generate book lists that contain titles based on the criteria you enter such as book level, topic, interest level, fiction/non-fiction, etc.



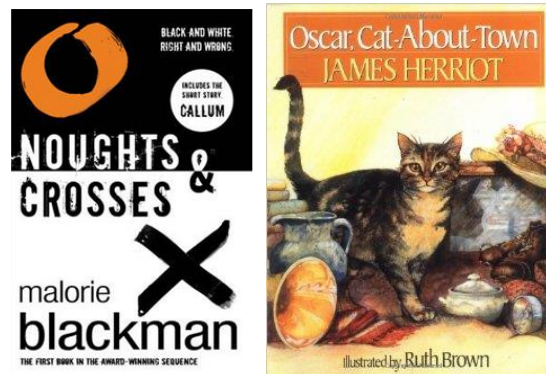
Is it OK for my child to read outside of his/her reading level?

Just because a child can read the words in a book does not mean the content is appropriate. The interest level of the material must be considered. Interest level is based on content—a book's themes and ideas—and indicates for which age group a book is appropriate. The chart below shows which ages fall into each interest level.

Interest Level	Year Level
LY – Lower Years	Ages 5 – 8
MY – Middle Years	Ages 9 – 13
UY – Upper Years	Age 14 and above

These are recommendations. It is the responsibility of teachers, librarians and parents to use their best judgment when guiding children to appropriate books.

In many cases, a book's interest level coordinates with its book level. Many books, however, have a low book level but are appropriate for upper years and vice versa. For example, both *Oscar, Cat-About-Town* by James Herriot and *Noughts & Crosses* by Malorie Blackman have a book level of 4.0 since both have short sentences and vocabulary that is simple. *Noughts & Crosses* is intended for older pupils; therefore, it is tagged as Upper Years, while *Oscar, Cat-About-Town* is tagged as Lower Years.



My child already does well in school. Why does he/she need this?

Even if a child is gifted at playing a musical instrument, the child has to practise to develop his or her talent. Bright children, like all children, need to be challenged. Teachers using AR software in their classrooms find it easy to guide each pupil to books that give the child both challenge and success, regardless of the child's level.

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

Accelerated Reader helps all children become better readers, from pupils with special needs to those who are gifted and talented. When children read books at an appropriate level, they experience success. Furthermore, teachers work with children to set appropriate targets based on each child's reading level.

How will my child take a quiz?

There are three different ways pupils can take Accelerated Reader quizzes at school: on the computer, on a tablet or on a mobile device (iPad®, iPod touch® or iPhone®). The system is not set to be able for quizzing from home.

How does AR fit in with the National Curriculum?

Accelerated Reader is just one strand of the teaching of reading at Sebert Wood School. We do not intend that it should replace the teaching activities already in place across the school. Staff will continue to plan and teach a variety of sessions based on the requirements of the National Curriculum and the needs of your child. The termly STAR Tests and outcomes of the book based quizzes will guide the teachers in planning the next steps in learning for each individual and will inform the judgements that teachers make to decide whether the child has reached the expected standard (EXS) or is working at greater depth (GDS) at the end of each academic year.

Personalising Learning

Teachers often narrow the range of ZPDs we ask the children to select books from. This makes sure that the books are sufficiently challenging, but also that the child can successfully pass the quizzes to ensure develop the comprehension skills of a confident, fluent reader.

Some children have specific preferences in reading matter. It is possible to use the bookshelf and AR Bookfind to identify books children will enjoy. We are happy for children to read and do quizzes books from home or the library.

HOW CAN PARENTS SUPPORT THEIR CHILD?

Please continue to hear your child read and record this in their Reading Logs.

Although the children can only take quizzes in school you can still support them in developing their decoding skills by hearing them read, and help them with comprehension skills by asking questions about their reading book.

The progress data has shown that Accelerated Reader is a useful tool in developing children's reading, but they do still need the input from parents at home and reading activities with the school staff to maximise progress. The children that have made the best progress are heard to read frequently by parents or carers, undertake the quizzes and have wide reading experiences in school.