



A Parent's Guide to Accelerated Reader

We have recently introduced a new reading programme in school for children from Years 2 – 6. Accelerated Reader has been running successfully for over 30 years in the USA and has been adopted by thousands of schools worldwide. Extensive research indicates that it has a significant impact on children's reading ability and comprehension skills. It is also widely used in secondary schools. We hope that the following information gives you a little more information about the programme.

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, they will take a short quiz on the computer in school - passing the quiz is an indication that your child has understood what has been read. There are over 25,000 books with AR quizzes. Many titles also have vocabulary quizzes attached. AR gives both children and teachers feedback based on the quiz results which the teacher then uses to help the child set targets and 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 are taking ownership of their reading and can choose books that are interesting to them. Teachers and staff will support pupils by guiding them to books appropriate to their ability and interests, asking probing questions as your child reads and before quizzing, pairing your child with others or reading with or to them. They take on the role of reading coach for the children who have their own individual pathway through their reading development.

Since they're 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 will my child read during the school day?

According to research, children who read at least 30 minutes a day with a 90% comprehension rate (average percent correct) on AR quizzes see the greatest gains. We are building in this time for reading into our school day whenever possible. To use a sporting analogy, the children will be clocking up miles on the track with their reading coach (the teacher.) Reading regularly at home is also of enormous benefit to the children. We are encouraging the children to carry books between home and school on a daily basis, using their book bags in order to protect the books. By all means, give support if necessary, talk to your children about their books and above all, give praise and encouragement.

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 is correct, the difficulty level is increased. If the child misses a question, the difficulty level is reduced. The test uses multiple-choice questions and takes approximately 15 minutes. Tests are taken usually three times per year. They give a variety of information about the child's reading, including the ZPD.

What is a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)?

ZPD is the range of books that will challenge your child without causing frustration or loss of motivation. Your child will receive a ZPD, or reading range after taking a STAR reading test. It is important for children to read with a high degree of comprehension and within his/her ZPD.



What is a book level?

Book levels are allocated using a specially developed readability formula. They represent the difficulty of the text and range from 0.5-13.5. Books are chosen based on the ZPD recommended for each child by STAR reading.

What are points?

Every book that has an AR Reading practice quiz is given a points value. AR points are based on the length of the book. Pupils earn a percentage of the points according to how well they pass the quiz. Shorter books have a smaller number of points, but because more quizzes will be completed, a fair number of points will be earned. Longer books have more points, but the child will be taking quizzes less often.

What is the interest level?

Our books are arranged in the library in interest levels. The interest level indicates for which age group a book is appropriate, based on the content and themes. Within each interest level, we have books of varying complexity in terms of the difficulty of the text. These are recommendations only and teachers will use their knowledge of the individual child when guiding pupils.

