

What is Accelerated Reader (AR)?

AR is a computer programme which helps teachers manage and monitor children's independent reading practice. Your child picks a book at his or her own level and reads it at his or her own pace. When finished, your child takes a short quiz on the school-based AR website - doing well in the quiz is an indication that your child has understood what has been read.

Teachers may assist pupils by:

- guiding them to books appropriate to their ability and interests
- challenging them to read a wider range of stories
- providing opportunities for your child to read, share reading or be read to

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

How can I help my child become a better reader?

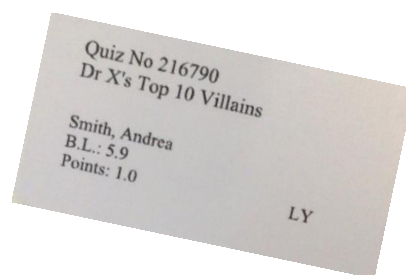
As with anything, performance improves with practice. According to Renaissance Learning's Research (the creators of AR), children who read at least twenty minutes a day, with a 90% comprehension rate on AR quizzes, see the greatest gains. Please encourage your child to read at home, discuss their books with them, ask questions about what they have read and visit your local library.

What is a STAR Reading test?

STAR Reading is used to determine your child's reading level. It is a computer-based reading assessment programme 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 cannot answer a question or answers incorrectly, the difficulty level is reduced. The test uses multiple-choice questions and takes approximately twenty minutes. The STAR reading test will be used to determine your child's book level.

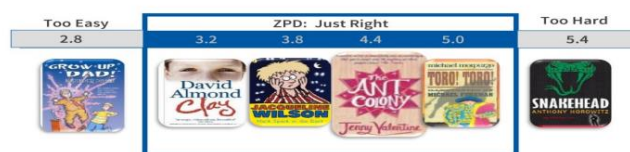
What is a Book Level?

Inside each book, there is a Book Level (BL) on a white sticker. Book Levels are reported using the ATOS™ readability formula and represent the difficulty of the text. The levels range from 0.5–13.5. Books are chosen based on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) range recommended for each pupil by the results of their initial STAR Reading assessment.



What is a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)?

ZPD is the range of books that will challenge a 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 understanding and within his/her ZPD.



This means that your child will not only be able to read the book, but understand enough of the words and meanings to have a good comprehension of what has been read. This sound understanding will also help your child to more easily draw on contextual clues to decipher words, phrases or sentences which are less familiar.

Can my child read outside of the ZPD range?

In the same way that an adult will choose a relaxing read, an old favourite or a more challenging novel, children are free to select a book outside of their given range. However, it has been shown that when 60-70% of a child's reading is within this range, more progress is made.

What is Interest Level?

On the sticker inside the book, there is LY (Lower Years, ages 5-8), MY (Middle Years, ages 9-13) or UY (Upper Years, ages 14+). The Interest Level indicates for which age group a book is appropriate, based on the content and themes. These are recommendations only and teachers and parents are advised to use their best judgement when guiding pupils.



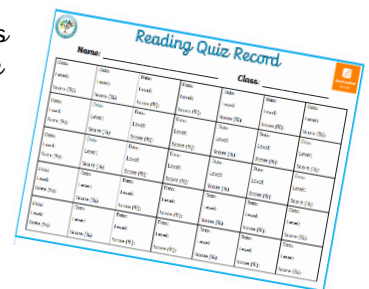
The examples above have a book level of 4.0, as both have short sentences and vocabulary that is simple. However, the subject matter in Noughts and Crosses is intended for older pupils - Upper Years, while content of The Enormous Crocodile is more suited to Lower Years.

What is the Quiz Number for?

On the sticker, there is a quiz number for each book. In AR, there is a database of over 25,000 book quizzes, with more being added every week. Soon after completing a book, children log-in to AR at school and enter the quiz number. There are ten questions, written at a reading level suitable for what has been read, for the child to answer in school time. There are times when a child is capable of reading a book at a far higher level than they are comprehending. Ultimately, this will hinder progress. The quiz will enable teachers to check understanding easily and frequently. This quiz should be completed at school, and shouldn't be completed at home.

What feedback will teachers and pupils receive?

Accelerated Reader provides instant feedback for pupils and tracks all scores. Teachers monitor quiz results and provide encouragement and guidance. Students try to average 80% or above on their comprehension quizzes. This indicates good comprehension and will lead to greater progress in reading ability.



If children score 100% or 80-90% three times in a row, children can move on to the next ZPD number. Children will keep track of the scores on their 'quiz card' which is kept in school.

Celebrations:

Different aspects of AR will motivate different children. For some, seeing an increasing word count will be encouraging; the number of words in each book and each quiz are added to a running total. Who will be the first to a million words? Once the system is in place, we will be able to celebrate with children as they meet their own specific goals (e.g. reading a wider range of books than before, reading more regularly or challenging themselves to learn new vocabulary found in their reading).

Thank you for taking the time to read our handout.

If you have any other questions, please speak to your class teacher or Mrs K. Evans.

