

## **Accelerated Reader**

At Aylesford School – Sports College we use software designed by Renaissance Learning to promote reading for pleasure and help children of all ages and abilities learn to read and read to learn. Currently all students in years 7, 8 and 9 are participating in this reading programme.

We have decided to use Accelerated Reader as it has been proven to be a very effective system for motivating children and ensuring good reading progress.

### **What is Accelerated Reader (AR)?**

AR is a computer programme that helps manage and monitor children's independent reading practice. Each student picks a book at his/her own level and reads it at his/her own pace. When finished, they take a short quiz on the computer - passing the quiz is an indication that the book has been understood. AR gives feedback based on the quiz results which is then used to help set targets for on-going reading practice.

Students using AR have a free choice of the books they read, rather than having one assigned to them. This makes reading a much more enjoyable experience as they feel in control and can choose books that are interesting to them.

Staff will help students choose books that are at an appropriate reading level. These will be challenging without being frustrating and will also be at a level at which ensures students can pass the quiz and experience success.

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, best of all they learn and grow at their own pace.

### **How much reading should be done each day?**

According to Renaissance Learning's research, children who read at least 20 minutes a day with a 90% comprehension rate on AR quizzes see the greatest gains.

As with anything, performance improves with practice. We recommend that each student reads for a further 20 minutes at home. In this time it is a good idea that they read aloud.

### **How are the reading levels determined?**

At the beginning of each term students will take a STAR Reading test. STAR Reading is a computer based reading assessment programme that uses computer-adaptive technology. The student is presented with questions, which require a multiple choice answer. Questions continually adjust to the responses given. If a response is correct, the difficulty level is increased, if a question cannot be answered or is answered incorrectly, the difficulty level is reduced. The whole test takes approximately 10 minutes. A report gives an estimated reading age and national curriculum level which can be used to set an appropriate level of challenge.

### **What is a Book Level?**

Books are levelled using a nationally recognised readability formula and represent the difficulty of the text. 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 (ZPD) recommended for each child by STAR Reading. Our reading books have been given an Accelerated Reader sticker which indicates the level of the book. The books are organised on the shelves according to levels to make it easier for students to choose an appropriate book.

### **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. Students will be given a ZPD range after taking a STAR Reading test. It is important for children to read with a high degree of comprehension and within their ZPD.

### **What are points?**

Every book that has an AR Reading Practice Quiz is given a points value. AR points are based on the difficulty and length of the book (number of words). The point's value is indicated on a label at the back of each book.

Children earn points depending on how well they do on the Reading Practice Quiz. For example, a student 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 student 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. Students need to pass a quiz with a score of 60% or higher to earn points.

### **How many Accelerated Reader quizzes are there?**

There are over 20,000 AR quizzes available and more are being written every month. The School has a growing book stock, but there is nothing preventing children from reading their own personal books or even books on loan from the library provided they are checked on the system and are within their range.

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

Students can bring a book into school, log in to the system and search for the quiz. Alternatively they can go to [www.arbookfind.co.uk](http://www.arbookfind.co.uk) which allows you to conduct a search of all available books with AR quizzes.

### **Can progress be checked at home?**

Renaissance Place Home Connect System can be accessed from any web-enabled computer; this allows parents to keep track of their child's progress. Once in the program, progress towards targets, points and books read can be viewed. AR BookFinder can also be used to search for titles of interest.