

Parent's Guide to Accelerated Reader™

Questions and answers

Your child will be participating 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.com/ar.

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 own level and reads it at his 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 goals 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. 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. In most cases, children really enjoy taking the quizzes. 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?

Children who read at least 20 minutes a day with a 90% comprehension rate (average percent correct) on AR quizzes see the greatest gains. **Therefore, it is important that your child have at least 20 minutes (15 minutes for 1st grade) set aside for reading during each school day or makes up for missed time on the weekends.**

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

Teachers determine your child's reading by a STAR Reading™ test.

What is a STAR Reading test?

STAR Reading is a computerized 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 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. It's 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 is an ATOS book level?

Book levels are reported using the ATOS™ readability formula and represent the difficulty of the text. For example, an ATOS book level of 4.5 means that the text could likely be read by a student whose reading skills are at the level of a typical fourth grader during the fifth month of school.

What is ATOS 2000?

Renaissance Learning has created an alternate book level based on the Lexile Framework® scale. Altos 2000 is a transformation of a book's ATOS level to a scale that is similar—but not identical—to the Lexile scale. The Scholastic Book Order Forms use the Lexile scale to mark the books' reading level. *Please note the ZPD 2000 is the ZPD converted to the Lexile scale.*

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 (ATOS readability level) and the length of the book (number of words). For example, the *Berenstain Bears* books, which are about 1,000 words long and have an average ATOS book level of 3.5, are 0.5-point books. *Hank the Cowdog*, which is about 23,000 words long and has an average ATOS book level of 4.5, is a 3-point book. *The Sun Also Rises*, about 70,000 words long and at an ATOS book level of 4.4, is a 10-point book. 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 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. Tom Clancy's *Executive Orders*, for example, is a 78-point book while Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is a 4-point book. Keep in mind that this doesn't mean we think *Executive Orders* is a better book or more worthwhile to read than *Macbeth*, only that—at 458,453 words vs. 19,048 words—it is much longer and provides more reading practice time.

How are Accelerated Reader point goals set?

The Accelerated Reader Goal-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. **Your child has been given a goal for how many points he should receive in a quarter. If your child reads books within his ZPD range for at least 20 minutes each school day, he should be able to reach this goal.**

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

There are over 152,000 AR quizzes available. To know which quizzes are available, you can visit the AR BookFinder at arbookfind.com.

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

Visit arbookfind.com and click on 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/nonfiction, etc.

How will I know if books are appropriate for my child?

Just because a book is at an appropriate reading level for your child doesn't 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 grades fall into each interest level.

Interest Level	Grade Level
LG—Lower Grades	K–3
MG—Middle Grades	4–8
MG+—Middle Grades Plus	6 and up
UG—Upper Grades	9–12

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. *Hank the Cowdog*, for example, the content of which is suitable for fourth-graders, has a book level of 4.5. Many books, however, have a low book level but are appropriate for upper grades and vice versa. For example, Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* has a book level of 4.4 because its sentences are short and its vocabulary is simple. The interest level, however, is UG for Upper Grades. In contrast, *Arthur Throws a Tantrum* has a book level of 4.9 because it contains fairly long words and sentences, but it is intended for students in the lower grades.

How will I know how my child is doing?

You can access your child's AR information in Renaissance Home Connect™ from a computer with Web access. Your school will give you your log in credentials for this website. Once in the program, you can view your child's progress toward goals, points, and books read. You can only access information about your child. You can also access AR BookFinder to search for titles of interest. If you have questions, after logging in, click "Help" in the upper right-hand corner or contact your child's school.