



**Accelerated
Reader®**



**A Parent's Guide to
Accelerated Reader
at Ashgate
Primary School.**



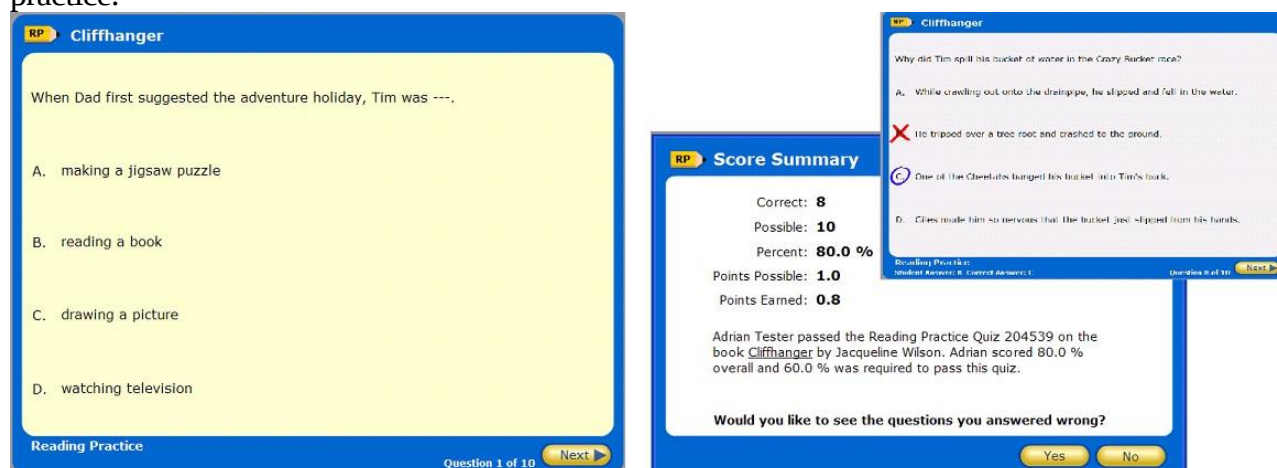
A Parent's Guide to Accelerated Reader at Ashgate Primary School

Questions and Answers

Your child will be participating in the Accelerated Reader (A.R.) program, which is the new reading system used in Key Stage 2. Accelerated Reader has been proven to be a very effective system for motivating children and ensuring good reading progress. This guide is designed to answer your questions about AR. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact your child's teacher, visit the school website at www.ashgate.derby.sch.uk or the Accelerated Reader website at www.renlearn.co.uk.

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 has understood what has been read. 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.



A Sample Quiz Question

Children 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.

Teachers and teaching assistants will help your child 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 your child can pass the quiz and experience success.

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

- Helping choose another book that is more appropriate
- Asking more probing questions as your child reads and before he/she takes a quiz
- Pairing your child with another pupil or even having the book read to your child.

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. 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 Renaissance Learning's research, children who read at least 20-35 minutes a day with a 90% comprehension rate on AR quizzes see the greatest gains. In Key Stage 2 the children read for 15 minutes in class.

How can I help my child become a better reader?

As with anything, performance improves with practice. We recommend that your child read for a further 15 to 20 minutes at home. In this time it is a good idea that your child reads aloud – you can too! When reading with your child stop and ask questions to be sure your child comprehends what they have read and in general make a habit of discussing books that each of you has read. Create a culture of reading in your household by starting a home library, visiting your local library or bookshop on a regular basis and by letting your child see you reading.

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

Teachers determine your child's reading level in three ways: a STAR Reading test, a reading age estimation from optional test scores, or by using his/her best professional judgment based on his/her knowledge of your child.

What is a STAR Reading test?

In September your child will take a STAR reading test. STAR Reading is a computer based reading assessment program that uses computer-adaptive technology. The child is presented with 34 questions which require a multiple choice answer. 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 whole test takes approximately 20 minutes and is never an ordeal. A report gives an estimated reading age and national curriculum level which the teacher can use to set an appropriate level of challenge. This test is repeated each term.

What is a Book Level?

Books are levelled using a nationally recognized 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! A book level of 4.5, for example, means that the text could likely be read by a pupil whose reading skills are typical of a year five pupil. Normally, however, books are chosen between a range of levels (ZPD) recommended for each pupil by STAR Reading.



Our reading books have been given an orange sticker on which the level is indicated. The books are organized on the shelves according to level to make it easier for children 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. Your child will be given a ZPD range after taking a STAR Reading test or teachers will use their best professional judgment to determine a ZPD. It is important for children to read with a high degree of comprehension and within his/her ZPD. ZPDs are adjusted based on the needs and ability of the child.

What are points?

Every book that has an AR Reading Practice Quiz is given a points value. AR points are based on the difficulty of the book and the length of the book (number of words). The points value of our books is indicated on the sticker on the inside cover of the book.

Children earn points on a pro rata basis depending on how well they do on the Reading Practice Quiz. For example, a pupil 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 pupil 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.



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 their appropriate level, they experience success. Furthermore, teachers work with children to set appropriate targets based on each child's reading level.



How are Accelerated Reader point targets set?

Teachers can set a target of a number of points to achieve in a half term. Achieving a half term's target is rewarded and children are praised by the head teacher in special merit assemblies. The target is designed to be motivational and to ensure enough reading practice is happening to guarantee progress.



How many Accelerated Reader quizzes are there?

There are over 28,000 AR quizzes available and more being written every month. The school has an extensive 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



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

There are several ways of achieving this. Your child can bring a book into school, log in to the system and search for the quiz. Alternatively, there is the AR BookFinder service available at www.arbookfind.co.uk which allows you to conduct a search of all available books with AR quizzes.

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

Visit www.arbookfind.co.uk and click on Advanced Search. By conducting an advanced search, you will be able to generate book lists that contain titles based on the criteria you enter such as Book Level, Topic, Interest Level and Fiction/Non-fiction, etc.



A Screen Shot of AR Book Finder
(www.arbookfind.co.uk)

Is it OK for my child to read outside of 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 years fall into each Interest Level.

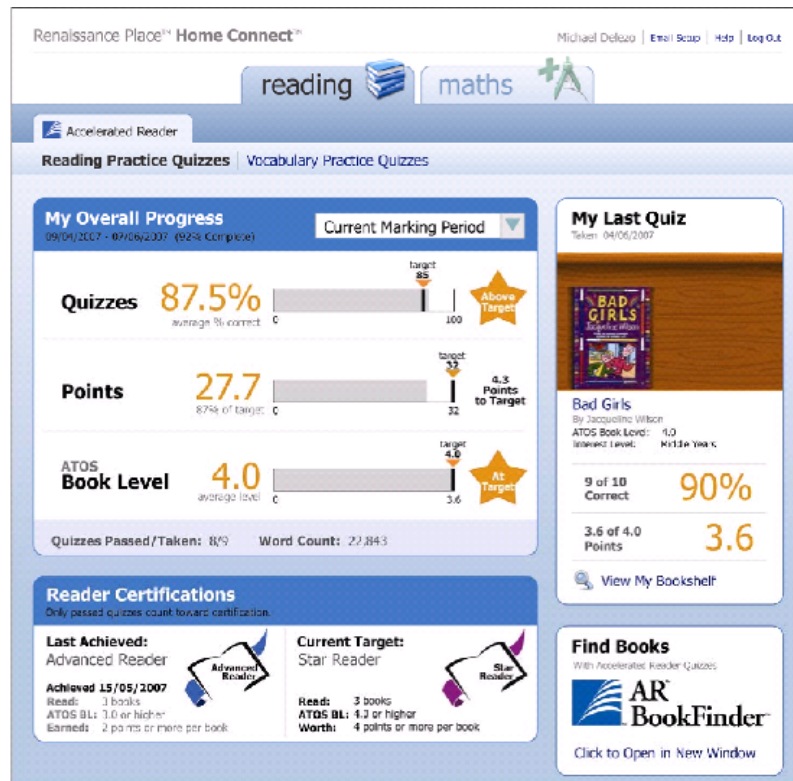
Interest Level	Year Level
LY—Lower Years	Key Stage 1
MY—Middle Years	Key Stage 2
UY—Upper Years	Key Stage 3/4



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.

How will I know how my child is doing?

The Renaissance Place Home Connect system can be accessed from any web-enabled computer, and will allow parents to keep track of their children's progress. A letter will be sent home telling you how to log into Home Connect. Once in the program, you can view your child's progress towards targets, points and books read. You can also access AR BookFinder to search for titles of interest. You can only access information about your own child.

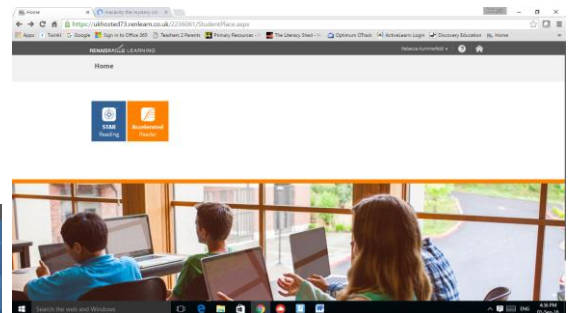
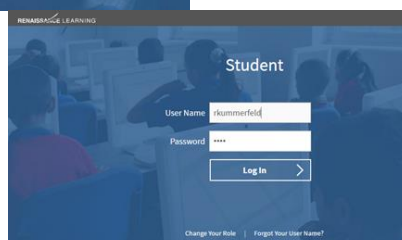
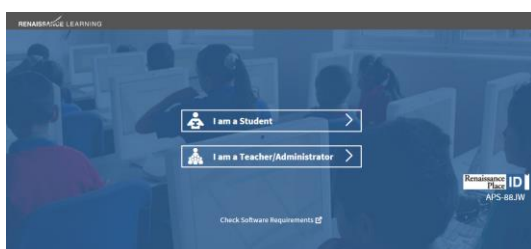


What if I have questions about using Renaissance Place Home Connect?

After logging in click on the Help icon in the upper right hand corner or contact your child's school.

How does my child access their Accelerated Reader page?

All Children have an individual username and password which is used to "log in" to the system. Children can only take tests at school during the school day hours.



How to use AR BookFinder:

Quick Search

The Quick Search tab in AR BookFinder works somewhat like a Google search because you can type keywords into a blank field.

1. Go to www.arbookfind.co.uk.
2. From the **Quick Search** tab on the top of the page, type in a book title, author or topic into the blank field and click **Go**.
3. To narrow the results, select any of the options on the left of the screen under **Refine Your Search**. You can continue to refine your search until you get your desired results.
4. If you want to create a booklist from the titles you are searching, click **Add to AR BookBag** button under the cover of any book you want to add to your list. This list can then be printed out for future reference.

Advanced Search

The Advanced Search tab allows you to refine your search. Here you can enter more search criteria such as ATOS Book Level, Interest Level, Topics / Subtopics, Fiction / Non-fiction and Language to get results that are more exact.

1. Click the **Advanced Search** tab on the top of the page.
2. Select **Contains, Starts With or Exact Match** to determine the parameters of your search.
3. Select your search criteria and click **Go**.
 - a. It is recommended that you enter an ATOS Book Level to be sure that the results are appropriate for your child. When entering an ATOS Book Level you are also required to enter an Interest Level. (Click on the question mark icon for more information on ATOS Book Levels and Interest Levels.)
 - b. It may be helpful to choose topic and subtopic to see a list of book categories if you are uncertain what books may interest your child.
4. To narrow the results, select any of the options on the left of the screen under **Refine Your Search**. You can continue to refine your search until you get your desired results.
5. You can add any of these books to your AR BookBag.

The screenshot shows the AR BookFinder website's Advanced Search page. At the top, there are three tabs: 'Quick Search', 'Advanced Search' (which is selected), and 'Custom Search'. Below the tabs, there are three radio buttons for search criteria: 'Contains' (selected), 'Starts With', and 'Exact Match'. The main search area contains several input fields: 'Title', 'Author', and 'ISBN'. Below these are dropdown menus for 'Quiz Released' (set to 'Any Date'), 'Interest Level' (set to 'Any Interest Level'), and 'ATOS Book Level' (with a range selector and a 'Show 2800-Point Scale' link). There are also dropdowns for 'Additional Criteria' (set to 'All Topics'), 'Subtopics', and 'Fiction/Nonfiction'. At the bottom of the search area, there is a 'Sort' dropdown (set to 'ISBN') and 'Go' and 'Clear Form' buttons. On the left side of the page, there is a sidebar with the 'AR BookBag' logo and a section titled 'Enter Keyword' with a text area and a search button. At the bottom of the page, there is a copyright notice: '©2007-2008 Renaissance Learning, Inc. All rights reserved. AR BookFinder Version 11.1302 - JK. Link AR BookFinder to your school's Web page.'