

Simon Balle All-through School

Creating Tomorrow's Citizens Today



'...I read so I can live more than one life in more than one place...' Anne Tyler on reading.

Guide for Parents

WHY?

Reading is essential to achieving our vision: students experience different voices and perspectives across time, culture and place, preparing them to be thoughtful, attentive and evaluative communicators.



WHY Accelerated Reader?

Reading is a skill, and as with every skill, it requires practice. Practice does not automatically lead to growth. To be effective, reading must be at the right level of difficulty, cover a certain amount of time, and involve guidance from a coach. Accelerated Reader (AR) provides data that helps monitor and personalise reading practice. It encourages good practice through quizzes and monitoring results. Reading at the right level is important - if it is too hard it can be frustrating, if too easy, it will not lead to improvement. We believe that by using AR, the most popular reading practice software in over 8000 schools in the UK and Ireland, our students will improve their reading skills, practice and habits.

INDEPENDENT READING

Guided independent reading practice is recognised as an essential part of any learning process. As it relates to reading in particular, research indicates that time spent reading books is the best predictor of academic achievement. The more you read, the more you know. It builds vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, writing and higher order thinking skills. Reading practice is most beneficial when guided i.e when it is coupled with feedback (quiz results, points targets) and instructional support from coaches. This is exactly what AR provides. It is personalised to each student to ensure a high rate of success with immediate feedback. Research shows that 1 in 4 children do not own their own books at home. AR helps in these situations.

THE PROCESS

Up to four times a year students will take a STAR test. This measures a student's reading ability through a series of 34 questions. Every test for every student is different. The software selects different questions for each student depending on how well they answer the previous question. Essentially, the computer adapts the test to suit your child. By taking a STAR test, students are given a ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development), known as a Reading Range (RR), to guide the selection of appropriate texts suited to their vocabulary knowledge and comprehension. STAR tests are taken up to four times a year so that students can see their progress and continue to make informed reading choices as their ZPDs change and improve. All books in the library include a ZPD number which allows students to choose texts within their range and, therefore, offering them the right level of challenge. Each book's level is assigned using a readability formula, ensuring consistency and reliability when measuring text complexity. Each book is also given a points value based on its difficulty to read and its length. Each student is given a Book Points Target for each half term. Reading a book and then taking the quiz will build towards their target. They can check where they are with regards to their target on their AR account.

As well as points, each book has an 'interest' age which relates to content and appropriateness. The Library Team also checks the recommended reading age and 'interest' level for school library books.

LY = 5-8yrs

MY = 9-13 years

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MY+ = 12 and above

UY = 14 and above.

Each student has the choice of which book to read. We have a number of tools to assist them. There is a folder that contains a list of books in a number of genres. There is also a book What will I Read Next? This lists authors a student has read and enjoyed and authors that are similar in and or topic. There is also the Library Team. We have tried to build a range of books not only for interest age but also for book level. We try to ensure that students that have lower RR can experience books within the age range. We also have a large collection of classics for those at the upper end of the RR.

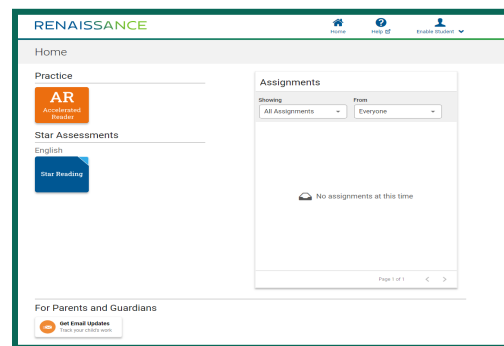
READING FOR 30 MINUTES A DAY IS REQUIRED FOR SUCCESS AND PROGRESS.

Each week students will have an AR lesson in the Library. Their coach will spend the time chatting to students about their quiz success and their points target. The time will also be used to check the book level is correct for the student and provide assistance with book selection where needed. Once a book has been read, students should take the relevant book quiz, usually within two days. Book quizzes are available online between 7am and 8pm, every day of the week to allow students to be timely in taking a book quiz. Two days is the suggested time to ensure students recall the book details in as much depth as possible to maximise their chances of completing the quiz. An average of 85% quiz success rate will ensure progress is made.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS/CARERS

AR can only be successful if it is driven, not just in school but at home as well. Encourage your child to read more. Conversations about the book they are currently reading will help with this drive. Checking that the 20 minutes or more reading time has been completed each day is important as often home is where much of the reading will take place. You can view your child's results by signing into their account with them. You can see how many books they have read, what their quiz results are, how many words they have read as well as how close they are to achieving their Book Points Target. You can see what each item means, a suggestion of which books are suggested to be read next, again a good conversation starter. This is a great way to interact with your child about AR reading.

Finally, when your child signs in to the homepage of AR, (you will see the orange and blue buttons) at the bottom of the page, there is a button under the heading 'For Parents and Guardians'. The button says "Get email updates". Click on this button and you can provide details of email addresses that you want progress updates sent to. Each time your child completes a quiz or STAR test you will be notified.



If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

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