



At Tollgate, we love reading, and we want all of our children to become fluent, accurate readers who enjoy reading and will continue to read for all sorts of reasons for the rest of their lives...this is our Intent!

We know that children who only read books that are too easy or too hard for them will not become life-long readers; they will become bored and may give up reading.

At school, we make sure that our children read a wide range of texts within their lessons. Sometimes this is a complete book, sometimes it is part of a book; sometimes it is information from the Interactive Whiteboard. We make sure that all of these texts are matched to the expectations of each year group.

However, it is harder to accurately match the books that children read independently to their individual reading ability, particularly if the child no longer needs a structured reading scheme. Sometimes we find that children get 'stuck' knowing what to read next, and they often are not sure which author or kind of book will suit them.

In common with several other schools locally, we have found a solution...Accelerated Reader.

*Accelerated  
Reader*



## Guide for Parents

*As part of our commitment to developing a culture of reading for pleasure and a lifelong love of reading, we are excited to announce that your child will be participating in Accelerated Reader - a program which aims for all children to experience success in achieving their reading goals.*

*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.co.uk](http://www.renlearn.co.uk).*



## What is Accelerated Reader?



Accelerated Reader is a computer-based reading program designed to encourage and promote successful reading. 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. They do not have to take a quiz for every book that is read and we have a large selection of books not allocated to the programme.

AR gives children, parents and teachers feedback based on the quiz results which the teacher then uses to help the child set targets and ongoing reading practice.

Children tend to 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 is my child's reading level determined?



Your child will take a Star Reading test that determines his/her appropriate reading level using computer adaptive technology. This test will be taken four times a year - September (at the start of the new academic year), October, February and May (at the end of terms 1, 3 and 5).

After undertaking this assessment, the class teacher is then provided with a range of information related to your child's reading ability. This includes: their reading age, the difficulty range of books that your child should be reading (ZPD) and how children can be supported to improve their reading comprehension.

Based on your child's performance on this diagnostic tool, he/she is assigned a zone of proximal development, or ZPD.



## What is a 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 range after taking a STAR Reading test. It's important for children to read with a high degree of comprehension and within their ZPDs.

## Choosing appropriate books

Each book in school that is part of the AR programme will contain a label stating the quiz number, the book level (BL), the interest level (LY, MY, UY) and a points value.

Quiz No 218263  
My Name Is Mina

Almond, David  
B.L.: 4.2  
Points: 5.0

MY

## 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 – not how long the book is or how many pictures it contains. The books are labelled on the spine and organised on shelves in classrooms and in the library according to level to make it easier for children to choose an appropriate book. Your child will choose books to read within their ZPD range recommended by the STAR reading assessment.

## What is an interest level?

Just because a child can read the words in a book does not mean the content is appropriate.

When choosing a book, it is essential that the child is interested in the book, will enjoy reading it and feel success in having finished it and understood it.

Within AR, the 'Interest Level' of a book is based on content—a book's themes and ideas—and indicates for which age group a book is appropriate. Two books may have the same book level but be in different interest levels, for example The Enormous Crocodile and Noughts and Crosses are both level 4, but their content is hugely different.

Interest Level	Appropriate School Year Level
LY (Lower Years)	Key Stage 1 and Year 3/4
MY (Middle Years)	Years 4, 5, 6
UY (Upper Years)	Some Year 6 children and Key Stage 3+



# 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 (ATOS readability level) and the length of the book (number of words).

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 points 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 any points.

## Frequently asked questions

### 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.

If your child is still reading from the book band scheme, they will be able to take quizzes for books that are included in the programme. They will also be assigned a ZPD range, meaning they can select books from the library shelves as well.

### How many Accelerated Reader quizzes are there?

There are over 12,000 AR quizzes available and more being written every month. The school has an extensive book stock. We are always looking to extend our book stock even further, so if you are considering getting rid of any old books that are in a decent state, please consider donating them to the school for us to check the catalogue and use them in classes.

We have a large number of books in school that are not on the AR system and these are identified with black stickers. These books are available for all children to choose from, it just means there is no accompanying quiz.

### How will my child take a quiz?

Quizzes will only be taken **at school**. Time is allocated each school day for children to take quizzes on iPads when they have completed a book. Your child ideally needs to take a quiz within 24 hours of completing their book where possible. Children may take quizzes of books they have read at home but should make sure they have read and understood each book before completing a quiz.

No child will ever be made to finish a book they are not enjoying; however, they can only take a quiz if they have read the whole book. Any child who continually switches from one book to another without completing them will be offered support in choosing books.



# How can I help my child become a better reader?

According to research, children who read at least 35 minutes a day with a 90% comprehension rate (average percent correct) on AR quizzes see the greatest gains. Therefore, your child should have **at least 35 minutes** set aside for reading each day.

At Tollgate, we have timetabled a **'Read and Relax'** session in school each day for 20 minutes. Each child is then expected to read at home for 15 minutes each day.

As with anything, performance improves with practice. Encourage your child to read at home. Create a culture of reading in your household by reading with your child and show that you value reading. Reading with your child, no matter what the child's age, is an important part of building a lifelong love of reading and learning.



## How will success be celebrated?

At Tollgate, we want to encourage children to strive to do their best and to achieve the realistic reading goals that have been set for them. Therefore, achieving a term's target will be rewarded. Teachers will look to develop their own in-class systems alongside whole school rewards.

Teachers set a target of a number of points your child is expected to achieve in a half term. Each child's target is personalised and relevant to their individual ability in reading.

Your child's target is designed to be motivational and to ensure enough reading practice is happening to guarantee progress. Staff in school will closely monitor children across the term to ensure they are on track to achieve their goal / target by the end of the term.

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

Visit [www.arbookfind.co.uk](http://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.

If the books are at your child's AR reading level, then they may be able to access the book from home, from the classroom, or from the school library. Once they have enjoyed the book, they can complete the relevant quiz in school!

This is also a really good way of finding suggestions for books for birthdays etc.

## How will I know how my child is doing?

Children will record their quiz scores in their reading diaries for you to see. Reports are generated through the programme and these will be shared with you systematically throughout the year. If teachers have any concerns, they will contact you directly.

If you have any further questions please contact your child's class teacher or go to the Accelerated Reader website at [www.renlearn.co.uk](http://www.renlearn.co.uk).

