A Parent's Guide to Accelerated Reader™

Dear Parents
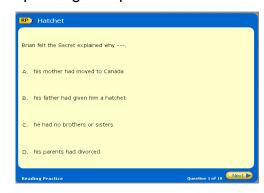Your child is now taking part in the Accelerated Reader programme.

What is Accelerated Reader (AR)?
AR is a computer program that helps teachers manage and monitor children's independent reading practice. Your child reads 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. We suggest that pupils read their book at least twice, unless otherwise instructed, and discuss with an adult the contents before taking the quiz.

How can I help my child become a better reader/How much should my child read during the day?
As with anything, performance improves with practice. 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. Encourage your child to read at home, discuss books, ask questions about what they have read and visit your local library. When reading with your child, stop and ask questions to ensure your child has understood. Reading with your child no matter what the child's age is an important part of developing a good reader and building a lifelong love of reading and learning. Within the classroom we will continue to use our usual teaching strategies such as guided, group and whole class reading for a variety of purposes, which is separate from Accelerated Reader.

What is a STAR Reading test?
STAR Reading is used to determine your child's reading level. It is a computer based reading assessment program that uses computer-adaptive technology. Questions continually adjust to your child's answers. If the child's answer is correct, the difficulty level is increased. If the child cannot answer a question or answers incorrectly, the difficulty level is reduced. The test uses multiple-choice questions and takes approximately 10 minutes.

What is a Book Level?
Book Levels are reported using the ATOS™ readability formula and represent the difficulty of the text. The levels range from 0.5–13.5. Books are chosen based on the ZPD range recommended for each pupil by STAR Reading.

What is a Zone of Proximal Development (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, or reading range after taking a STAR Reading test. It is important for children to read with a high degree of comprehension and within his/her ZPD.

The books your child will bring home to begin with may be easier to read than you are used to seeing. As he/she completes the quizzes and their understanding of what they are reading improves, the difficulty of the books they will receive will increase.

What are points?
Every book that has an AR Reading Practice Quiz is given a points value. AR points are based on the length of the book (number of words). Pupils earn a percentage of points according to how well they pass the quiz.