



# **Reading with your child & a guide to Accelerated Reader**

**October 2017**

## **Reading with your child and a guide to Accelerated Reader**

This guide is designed to answer your questions about helping your child learn to read and Accelerated Reader. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact your child's teacher.

### ***What books will my child take home after they start school?***

Children from Reception to KS1 are provided with a reading book from the Phonic Bug reading scheme.



This reading scheme has been chosen to complement the synthetic phonic programme (Letters and Sounds) that operates in school. This reading scheme is a phonetically decodable scheme which is now recommended as the prime methods of teaching early reading skills.

In addition, children in KS1 will also supplement this with a book chosen by the child from the school library and an Oxford Reading Tree book at the appropriate level. This will enable children to engage in the Accelerated Reader scheme as they progress through this scheme. The nature of the phonic bug books are such that they are not included in the Accelerated Reader system. Children will be able to take quizzes from the Stage 3 Oxford Reading Tree. However, it is really important that they continue to practise their phonic skills with the phonic bug books which links to the daily phonics lessons and their weekly spellings

### ***How often will my child's books be changed?***

Generally speaking, we will aim to change reading books in KS1 as and when is required. This will be a number of times in the week.



### ***How do I listen to my child read?***

Please take time to read with your child at home. This should be a fun activity and choose time when your child is most responsive (i.e. not immediately before bedtime or during their favourite TV programme!)

Find a quiet, place to curl up with a book! This involves taking time out of often busy schedules. Make sure there are no distractions and that the TV is off. Generally speaking, children should read with an adult. This teaches children that reading is a grown-up thing to do, is valued and important. If the evening is not convenient, try reading first thing in a morning instead. Regular reading practise is the key to success,

Don't worry about trying to read the whole book! As your child increasingly accesses longer texts, it would be appropriate to read a few pages well rather than try to race through the whole text.

### ***What do I do when my child is reading?***

Encourage them to have a go at words they don't know by using the pictures in the story, the events of the book. Ask them questions about what they are reading from time to time. Above all, enjoy it! Laugh at the funny bits and enjoy this time!

### ***If my child reads the scheme quickly, will they be a better reader?***

No. Children who 'race' through the scheme are not better readers. Children who do often have little comprehension of the words they read they will often struggle to make deductions from the text, or predict. Worst of all, they may actually dislike reading which rather than being a pleasurable thing to do becomes a tiresome chore.

### ***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.

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.

Staff in school 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:

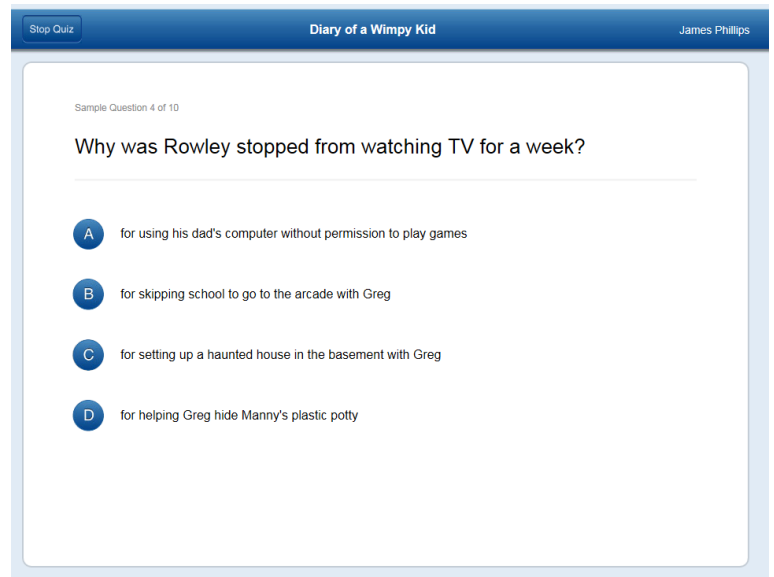
- Helping choose another book that is more appropriate
- Asking more probing questions as your child reads and before he/she takes a quiz
- Pairing your child with another pupil or even having the book read to your child.

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.

### ***Is this how reading is assessed in school?***

No. A 'book level' or 'reading age' does not enable an accurate assessment of reading to be made. Through reading tasks in literacy, through guided reading, the teacher will assess children's ability:

*to decode print* (to know what a words say) e.g. to sound out, to use the context of the writing to tackle unknown words, to vary intonation appropriately when reading)



to understand what they have read (to know what the words mean) e.g. to make predictions about a story, to ask and answer questions about what has been read, to discuss words and phrases that engage the reader

AR provides an additional tool for the teacher to use in informing this judgement. For more information about how the school assesses reading, please visit the school website or see your child's class teacher.

### ***How much will my child read during the school day?***

According to research, children who read at least 20 minutes a day with a 90% comprehension rate on AR quizzes see the greatest gains. Therefore, your child will have at least 20 minutes set aside for reading during each school day.

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

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, starting a home library, visiting your local library or bookshop on a regular basis and by letting your child see you reading. 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.

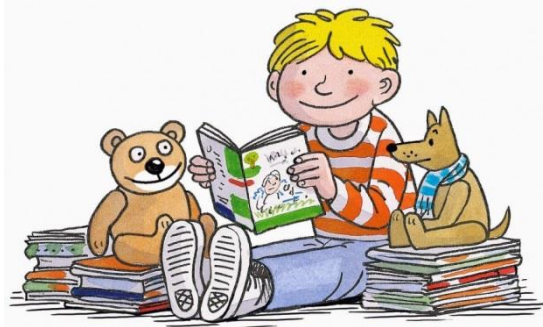
### ***How does the school determine my child's reading level?***

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

### ***What is a STAR Reading test?***

STAR Reading is a computer based reading assessment program 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 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?



Every child has undertaken an initial 'Star Reading' assessment which has provided them with a reading age, reading level and a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) range.

This ZPD range will allow the children to select appropriate reading books that will be best suited to develop their reading ability and comprehension. KS1 children will continue to use the Oxford Reading Tree Scheme to develop their reading as well as being given a ZPD number to identify other books within their reading ability. After children move from Oxford Reading Tree stage 7, we will encourage them to extend their reading by using their ZPD.

To enable children to easily find accessible books, during this half term every book in school has been labelled on the inside cover with a Book Level (B.L.) which refers to the ZPD range. These have been colour coded at the top of the book as follows:

Dark Green = 0.0-1.9

Yellow = 2.0-2.9

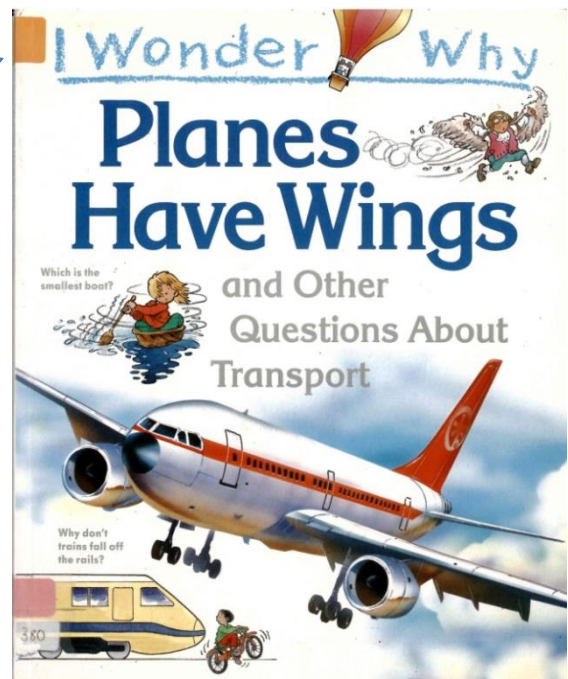
White = 3.0-3.9

Orange = 4.0-4.9

Blue = 5.0-5.9

Red = 6.0+.

Most children will be provided with a ZPD range that will span across two colours. A child's ZPD range could change during the year depending on their 'Star Reading' assessment which will be undertaken every half term. Every pupil will be given a sticker for their Links Book that will tell them, and yourselves, what their ZPD range is.

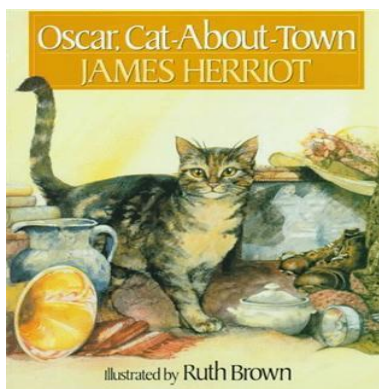




## ***Is it OK for my child to read outside of their reading level?***

Yes – this is fine. However, 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



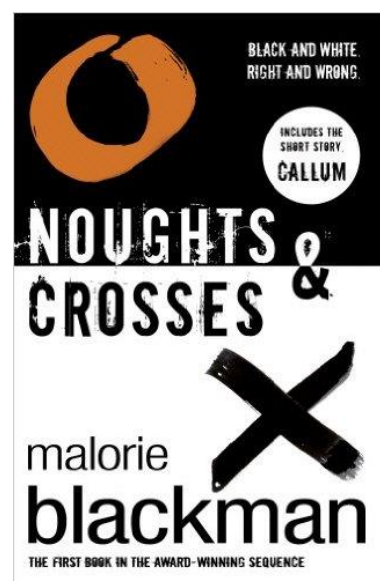
In many cases a book’s interest level coordinates with its book level. Many books however, have a low book level but are appropriate for Upper Years and vice versa. For example, Oscar, Cat – About – Town by James Herriot and Noughts and Crosses by Malorie Blackman have a Book Level of 4.0 since both have short sentences vocabulary that is simple. Noughts and Crosses, is intended for older pupils therefore it is tagged as Upper Years

while Oscar, Cat – About – Town is tagged as Lower Years.

However, if there is a book that is not on the Accelerated Reader system or there is a book that sits outside their ZPD range and they would really like to read it, we will not discourage them in doing so, but suggest that they read it as well as a book within their ZPD range.

### ***What are points?***

The most exciting part of the Accelerated Reader program is the quizzes that it provides. When your child has finished a book, they can take a quiz to test their knowledge of it and develop their comprehension skills.



These quizzes can only be accessed and undertaken within school during reading sessions or at break times and lunch times where a pupil can sit with a 'Reading Champion' (Selected Year 6 Pupil) to complete the quiz using an iPad or computer. When children have read a book and are ready to take a quiz, they need to sign up in the book near the Accelerated Reader wall.

### ***What do points make?!***

Prizes!!

Children receive rewards based on

- 1) The number of quizzes taken. There are lots of super prizes to reward children's participation in the scheme.
- 2) The number of words read. The total number of words read is recorded to chart children's performance towards 'The Millionaire's Club' (Children who read over 1 million words). The children's names will be added to a plaque in the entrance hall.
- 3) The point value of the book.



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).

You may notice that some popular books have more points assigned to them than some classic pieces of literature. *David Copperfield (Unabridged)*, for example is a 66-point book while Shakespeare's *MacBeth* is a 4-point book. Keep in mind that this does not mean we think *David Copperfield (Unabridged)* is a better book or more worthwhile to read than *MacBeth*, only that—at 339,112 words vs. 19,048 words—it is much longer and provides more reading practice time.



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 regardless of their reading ability.

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?***

The Target-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. Monitoring AR points earned by children and comparing them to the guideline values listed on the Target-Setting Chart enables your child's teacher to determine how well your child is using the time provided for reading practice.

### ***How many Accelerated Reader quizzes are there?***

There are over 11,000 AR quizzes available and more being written every month.

### ***What kinds of quizzes are there?***

Accelerated Reader includes several types of quizzes designed to support the development of several reading skills. Quiz types include:

Reading Practice Quizzes: Are the most common type of assessment in AR. The purpose of these quizzes is to determine whether your child has read a book, to measure his/her literal comprehension of the book and to provide immediate feedback. Each Reading Practice Quiz consists of 5, 10 or 20 multiple-choice questions depending on book level and length.

**Vocabulary Practice Quizzes:** Measure a child's command of vocabulary words in context while reading specific books. They are designed to reinforce vocabulary acquisition, assist with individualising vocabulary instruction and to stimulate your child's interest in words through authentic, in-context, literature experiences. Quizzes include 5, 10 or 15 words from a particular book as well as review words from previously read books.

**Literacy Skills Quizzes:** Are designed to give your child's teacher information on specific reading skills. Questions are randomly generated from a 36-strong item bank resulting in 12 or 24 quiz questions. Due to item-bank technology, Literacy Skills Quizzes can be taken up to three times. Quiz questions are based on 24 specific higher order reading comprehension skills.

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

The image shows a screenshot of the AR BookFinder website. At the top left, there is a logo with the text 'AR BookFinder'. Below the logo, the word 'Welcome' is displayed. The main content area contains the text: 'Searching for Accelerated Reader books is fun and easy with this free online tool. Please tell us who you are:'. There are four radio button options: 'Pupil', 'Parent', 'Teacher', and 'Librarian'. A 'Submit' button is located below these options. To the right of the text, there is a photograph of a young boy in a school uniform sitting at a desk and using a laptop.

You can also visit the AR BookFinder at [www.arbookfind.co.uk](http://www.arbookfind.co.uk) to conduct a search of all available books with AR quizzes.

### ***How can I help my child find books that they find interesting?***

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.

### ***Can my child take quizzes at home?***

The company that run AR only allow quizzes to be taken on the school network. Unfortunately it isn't possible to take quizzes at home.

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

A TOPS Report prints automatically after a child takes a quiz to give feedback on your child's understanding of the book and shows cumulative data for the marking period and school year.

Parents are able to access their child's AR information in Renaissance Place Home Connect from any web-enabled computer or tablet.



**My Last Quiz**  
Taken 13/07/2016



**The World's Worst Children**  
By David Walliams  
ATOS Book Level: 5.3  
Interest Level:

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10 of 10  
Correct **100%**

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3.0 of 3.0  
Points **3.0**

 [View My Bookshelf](#)

Once on the site, you will be able to view your child's progress towards targets, points and books read. You can also access AR BookFinder to search for titles of interest across an enormous range of books.