

A parent's guide to Accelerated Reader at Bassingbourn Primary School



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As your child moves into Key Stage 2, they will participate in the Accelerated Reader (AR) program, which is the reading system used in KS2. There is an overlap between the Book Banding System used in Key Stage 1 and the AR program, so the transition will be made when class teachers feel that children are ready. We appreciate that for some children, they will prefer the security of remaining on the Book Banding Scheme, not wanting too many changes at once. Children are able to select books of a similar ability level in both schemes, making the transition much smoother. The AR program is an effective way of giving older children a little more independence in their choice of reading material whilst still enabling us to track and promote reading very effectively here at Bassingbourn. If, having read this guide, you have any further questions – please feel free to contact your child’s teacher.

What is AR?

AR is a computer program that helps teachers monitor and manage children’s independent reading practice. Each term, your child will take a Star Reading test. This gives us a reading level (based on the AR scheme) for your child to select books from. Your child will select a reading book, from the library, at that level – and then proceed to read that book at home and at school. Once the book is finished, the child returns their reading book to school and places it in the ‘I’ve finished’ tray within their classroom. They are then given the opportunity to take a short quiz on the computer. Passing the quiz is an indicator that your child has understood what they have read. Both the children and the teachers receive feedback on the quiz results. If children achieve less than 60% they have failed the quiz. Children are encouraged to achieve over 85% as this indicates that they have read carefully.

Children are able to select freely from the books within the correct range for their reading level – these should be challenging without being frustrating.

If your child does not do well in the quiz, it is possible that they have skim read, or not read the book in adequate detail. It may be that they would benefit from paired reading for a little while. In most cases the children really enjoy taking the quizzes as they like to be successful!

How much will my child read during the school day?

It appears that children who read for at least 20 minutes a day see the greatest gains. In KS2, children will be given the opportunity to read for at least 20 minutes on most days, although it may not all be time spent reading their AR book – for instance they may be doing group guided reading with a teacher on a shared text. We are also very fortunate to have several parent helpers who come into school and spend time with individual children, listening to them read and helping them to select new reading books.

What is the STAR reading test?

In the first few days of each new term, your child will take a STAR reading test. This is a computer based assessment program. The child is presented with questions and multiple choice answers. Questions continually adjust to your child’s responses e.g. if the child’s response is correct, the difficulty level is increased. The whole test takes about 10 minutes and is not an ordeal. A report gives us an estimated reading age, a national curriculum level and an AR level (a reading range which is suitable for your child).

What are the book levels?

Book levels help us to ensure that your child is picking up a book which is suitable for them. Each book in the library is analysed according to its vocabulary, word length, sentence length, grammatical complexity etc. A book level of 4.5, for example, means that a text could likely be read by a child whose reading skills are average for a year 5 child. The book levels do not reflect ages, or year groups. Your child will be given a suggested reading range (or 'zone of proximal development' / zpd) e.g. 2.5 – 3.4. This indicates the lower and upper book levels that we are recommending for your child – so that their reading is adequately challenging. Our reading books are organised into these levels and have a sticker in the inside front, or back cover, which indicates their level.

What are points?

Every AR book has a 'points value'. AR points are based on the difficulty of the book and the length of the book. The points values of our books are also indicated on that inside sticker. Children earn points (pro-rata) 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 if they get all 5 questions correct, 0.8 points if they score 4 correctly etc. A child needs to pass a quiz with a score of 60% or higher to earn points. Class teachers monitor the number of points that are scored and success is rewarded.

What's the Interest Level (IL)?

We acknowledge that children's interests vary. Some of our year 3 and 4 children are very advanced readers who may be reading at book level 5 or above – however whilst they can read the words, the content may not be suitable for them. Likewise, we may have year 6 children who are reading at book level 2 or 3, but who want more advanced topics. IL represents interest level – LY indicates lower years (suitable for ages 5-8), MY represents middle years (suitable for ages 9-13) whilst UY usually suggests it would be of interest to teenagers. These bandings are merely guidelines – as children's interests vary hugely – but may be worth considering when selecting reading material.

What if my child wants another sort of book to read?

Each KS2 child is able to withdraw two books from the library. One of these should be an AR reading book which is read daily in school and at home. However, if your child wishes to withdraw an 'interest book' which might be a non-fiction text, or a harder fiction book that they wish to share with you as a bedtime reader – they are more than welcome!

Can I find out about which books are suitable for my child?

Yes...of course. You will be informed about the Zone of Proximal Development that we have suggested for your child. This means that you would be able to select books for them from their exact level. If you wish to withdraw books from the public library, or purchase books for your child, it is possible to access a website called 'AR bookfinder' (www.arbookfind.co.uk). On this website you can search for a particular book and discover the book level, interest level etc. or alternatively you can type in the level that your child is at and see a vast range of suggested books at that level – which could be borrowed or bought. Many libraries have internet access, so it would be possible to check books that interest your child to see if they are too easy, too hard, or just right. Unfortunately, not all books are on the AR system but the list is increasing every day, so it is worth checking a book on different occasions as it may well be added. It is also worth typing in the author's name if the title does not appear to be on the list. Sometimes a

misplaced apostrophe for example will suggest that the book is not on the scheme when actually it is. Whilst we do encourage children to read predominantly AR levelled books, it is possible to read others also, as described above.

If they read a book from the library, can they take another test at home?

Yes – they can take a quiz on a laptop at home by accessing

<https://ukhosted22.renlearn.co.uk/2240164/>

They can also use an ipad app for Accelerated Reader by inserting the school's unique number which is BPS-53BX

Please ensure that, if children take quizzes at home, they do so unassisted as the children need to be able to read the questions for themselves and respond from their memory of the material from the book.

So what now.....

...well, there's a lot more that we could offer in the future but we don't want to make it too complicated at first.

Thank you for your continued support!

The Key Stage 2 Team.