

Accelerated Reader and Tests

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Accelerated Reader Philosophy

The Accelerated Reader (AR) program has been around since 1986 and, according to the Renaissance Learning website, AR is the most popular and successful reading product that promotes reading from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade.

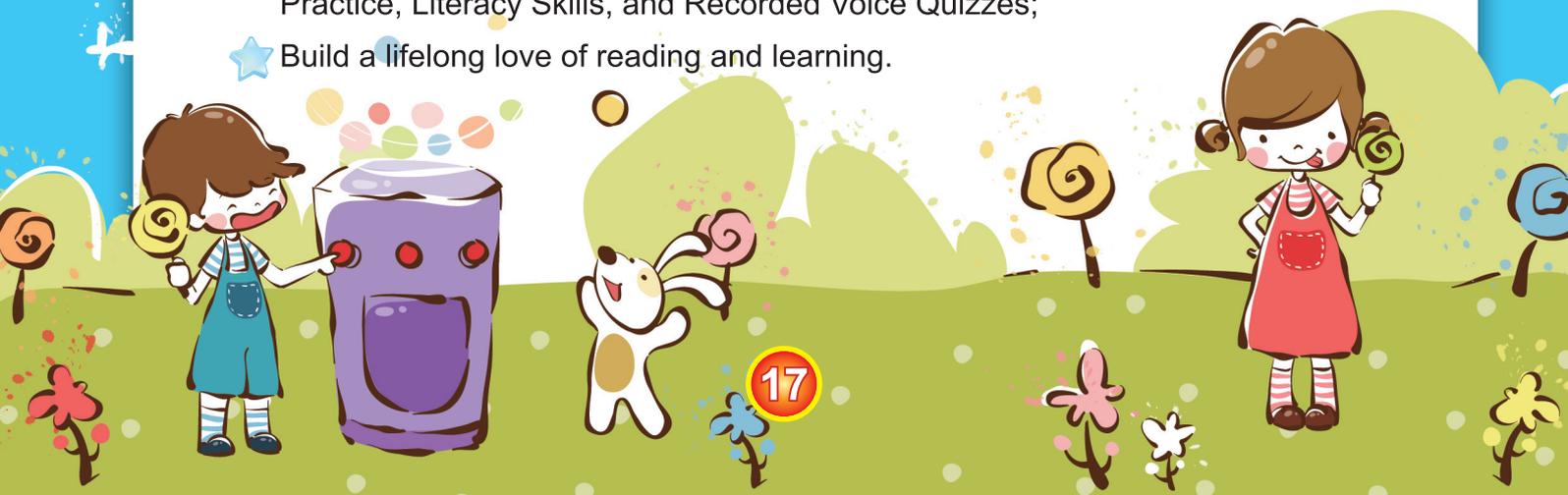
The AR program gets students to read books at an optimum level for advancement based on their tested reading level. The level assignment helps kids choose the right books and the tests provide feedback on the student's progress. AR books are evaluated and assigned a reading level and corresponding points depending on the level of difficulty of the sentences, vocabularies, and the length of the book. As of 2006, Renaissance Learning had categorized approximately 100,000 books into the AR system with quizzes written for each. About 10,000 are planned to be added every year. According to IntraData, Inc., over half of American schools are using AR. The program is even becoming a factor in children's book publishing. Many school librarians will not purchase book for which no quiz is available. There is pressure to get books approved before going to print.

The Basic Introduction of AR

1. Purpose

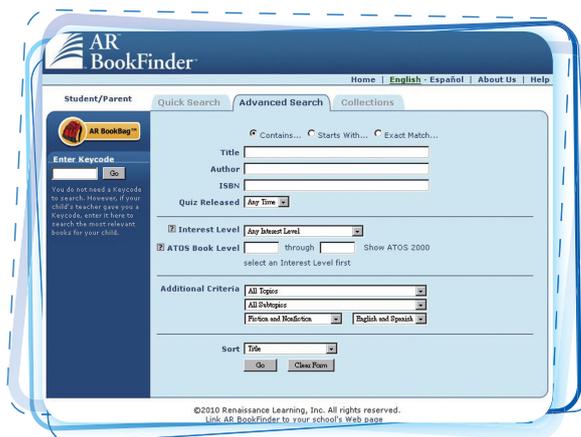
AR is an assessment that primarily determines whether a child has read a book or not and motivates students to read more and better books. The software provides additional information for students regarding reading rates, amount of reading, and other variables related to reading. AR's advanced technology helps you:

- ★ Make essential reading practice more effective for every student;
- ★ Personalize reading practice to each student's current level;
- ★ Manage all reading activities including read to, read with, and read independently;
- ★ Assess students' reading with four types of quizzes: Reading Practice, Vocabulary Practice, Literacy Skills, and Recorded Voice Quizzes;
- ★ Build a lifelong love of reading and learning.



2. Finding AR Titles on the Website

Much like a library database, parents, students and teachers may find AR books with available titles, authors, ISBN numbers, Interest Levels, or ATOS Book Levels on the ARBookFinder website. Students have to take a Standard Test of Achievement in Reading (STAR) to determine their reading levels. Many schools ask their students to read books only within their level to ensure a high Reading Accuracy Percentage.



3. Types of Reading Quizzes

Within the Accelerated Reader program, there are four types of quizzes. Reading practice quizzes ask students about the book to measure comprehension. Vocabulary practice quizzes help readers improve their vocabulary knowledge and skills. For beginning readers, recorded voice quizzes allow students to take the tests on their own with the help of a narrator. The literacy skills quizzes ask more difficult questions that require students to use 24 different reading skills.

How the AR Program Works

1. Assess Reading Levels Fast with STAR Reading

STAR Reading is a computer-adaptive reading test that helps you determine the reading placement levels and National Curriculum levels of all your students. It will also measure their growth throughout the year and predict their results on national tests.

This report presents diagnostic information about the student's general reading skills, based on the student's performance on a STAR Reading test.

Time for First Part: 15 minutes 39 seconds

SS	GE	PR	PR Range	IRL	Est. ORF	ZPD
243	2.2	63	52-73	1.9	62	2.1-3.1

This student's Grade Equivalent (GE) score is 2.2. His or her reading skills are therefore comparable to those of an average second grader after the second month of the school year. [redacted] also achieved a national Percentile Rank (PR) of 63. This score is in the average range and means that [redacted] scored greater than 63% of students nationally in the same grade. The PR range indicates that, if this student had taken the STAR Reading test numerous times, most of his or her scores would likely have fallen between 52 and 73. It reflects the amount of statistical variability in a student's PR score.

The STAR Reading Reports also provide some techniques to help student's continued growth in reading.

This student's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) for independent reading is book level 2.1-3.1. If Accelerated Reader™ reading management software is being used in your classroom or school, [redacted] should be encouraged to select books with book levels in the ZPD. These books will provide optimal reading challenge without frustration. The ZPD, however, is approximate. Success at any book level also depends on the student's interest and prior knowledge of a book's content.

The following techniques will also help ensure the student's continued growth in reading:

- Guide reading practice so that [redacted] averages at least 85 percent on Accelerated Reader Reading Practice Quizzes.
- Once [redacted] is able to maintain an 85% average, encourage him or her to raise his or her average to 90% or higher. High averages are associated with the greatest reading gain.
- Teach [redacted] how to select books throughout his or her ZPD.
- Use the Accelerated Reader Diagnostic Report and Student Record Report for more detailed information about the student's reading practice.

2. Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) defines the readability range from which students should select books in order to achieve optimal growth in reading skills without experiencing frustration. STAR Reading software uses Grade Equivalents (GE) to derive a student's ZPD score. Specifically, it relates the GE estimate of a student's reading ability with the range of most appropriate readability levels to use for reading practice.

The ZPD is especially useful for students who use Accelerated Reader, which provides readability levels on all books included in the system. The ZPD, however, is an approximate. Success at any reading level also depends on the student's interest and prior knowledge of a book's content. Teachers should use their professional judgment to adjust the level of books to match an individual student's needs and interests.

3. Accelerated Reader is as easy as A-B-C

A. Select and read a book in ZPD range

Students choose a fiction or non-fiction book, textbook, or magazine at their appropriate reading levels and read them at their own pace.

AR Book Levels	
First Grade	Red
Second Grade	Green
Third Grade	Orange
Fourth Grade	Yellow
Fifth Grade	Purple
Sixth Grade	Blue
Seventh Grade	Brown
Eighth Grade	White

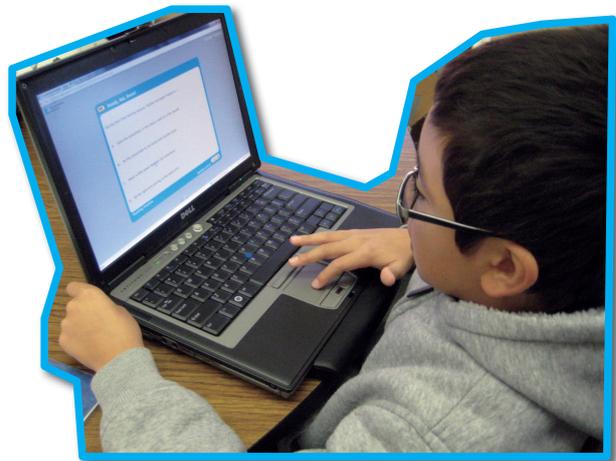




For example, a second grader may have a ZPD of 2.7 - 3.8. This means the child should be reading at a second grade, seven-month level up to a third grade, eight-month level. It's handy for parents to be able to check the label on the book to see if a book is within the child's assigned level.

B. Take the quiz

Kids are also sometimes given a goal of a number of points to accumulate. Kids select AR books that meet their criteria of points and reading level, read it, and take a quiz. The computerized tests have 5-20 questions designed to evaluate the student's comprehension. Points are determined based on the student's score as well as the book's possible points.



These quizzes help teachers and parents monitor each child's reading level and comprehension. Besides, teachers can create their own quizzes for those not available in Accelerated Reader. If you want to try it, you may check the website and click the titles below to take 4 types of quizzes.





(a) Reading Practice

Upper Grade - *Of Mice and Men* - Steinbeck, John

Middle Grade - *Tom Sawyer* - Twain, Mark

Lower Grade - *Honey for Baby Bear* - Randell, Ryan

(b) Recorded Voice - *Clifford's First Christmas* - Bridwell, Norman

(c) Vocabulary Practice - *Toughboy & Sister* - Hill, Kirkpatrick

(d) Literacy Skills - *Babbitt* - Lewis, Sinclair

RP Honey for Baby Bear

What did Baby Bear ask Mother Bear?

A. "Will you make my breakfast?"

B. "Who makes honey?"

C. "May I go into the forest?"

D. "Will you take me for a walk?"

Reading Practice Question 1 of 5 [Next](#)

C. Reports

Accelerated Reader reports are generated on demand and help students, teachers, and parents monitor a student's progress. More than 30 reports are available regarding students' reading, comprehension, amount of reading, diagnostic information, and other variables. Customizable reports are available in the Renaissance Place edition and can report district-level information.

Diagnostic Report: This report shows progress towards personalized goals and special diagnostic codes to help you identify students who are struggling and may need intervention.



Diagnostic Report—Reading Practice
Printed Tuesday, December 1, 2009 10:20:08 AM

Use this report to monitor progress on overall comprehension of authentic literature.

School: Oakwood Elementary School Reporting Period: 10/12/2009–11/25/2009 (Marking Period 2)

Report Options
Reporting Parameter Group: All Demographics [Default]
Quiz Language: Report on both English and Spanish quizzes
Group By: Class
Filter Student Quizzes: No

AR Best Practices focuses on Average % Correct, Points Earned, and Book Level to accelerate student learning.

Class: Grade 4 (Adams)
Teacher: Adams, Marcie

Student	Diag. Codes	RP Quizzes		% Correct		Points					Engaged Time Per Day ²	Book Level		Certification		
		Passed	Taken	Goal	Avg.	Goal	Earned	% of Goal	% Read Indep.	% Fiction		ATOS BL Goal	ATOS 2000 Avg.			
Anderson, Marcus		4	4	90	95.0	8.2	9.5	115.9	100	100	34.8	3.0	3.3	440	491	Achieved
Bell, Timothy		4	4	90	95.0	9.8	11.5	117.3	100	100	35.2	3.3	3.6	491	549	Achieved
Bosley, Matthew		8	8	90	96.3	7.6	7.6	100.0	100	75	30.0	2.6	2.9	361	420	Super(2)
Chang, Michelle		4	4	90	97.5	6.5	11.8	138.6	100	100	41.6	3.0	3.5	440	530	Star
Gonzales, Mari		5	5	87.5	87.5	9.1	7.1					3.6	4.0	549	549	Achieved
Halden, Susan		5	5	91.4	91.4	7.2	5.9					2.8	3.4	401	401	Advanced(2)
O'Neil, Sarah		5	5	100.0	100.0	10.9	15.0					4.1	5.0	631	631	Star(2)
Richmond, Angela		4	4	85	87.5	8.5	8.8	103.5	100	100	31.1	3.0	3.2	440	479	Achieved
Rodriguez, Carlos		5	5	85	82.0	9.5	5.6	58.9	100	60	17.7	3.2	3.0	479	440	Advanced
Stone, Lisa		7	7	85	94.3	7.8	7.7	98.7	100	100	29.6	2.6	2.9	361	420	Advanced
Average		5	5	88	92.6				100	89	30.9	3.0	3.3	440	491	

Diagnostic Code Summary

Number of Students	Percent of Students	Diag. Code	Code Description
0	0	A	No quizzes taken during period
0	0	B	Low average percent correct (70% to 79%)
0	0	C	Very low average percent correct (below 70%)
0	0	D	Low points earned - less than 1/2 median points. (1/2 median = 4.1 points)

Use the AR Average % Correct as an indicator of the strength of the Tier 1 classroom.

Class Summary

Number of Students	10
Total Quizzes	
Passed	51
Taken	51
Total Points	
Goal	87.1

Engaged Time
Engaged Time estimates minutes per day students are actively engaged in reading practice.

Notes:
 Carlos is below his goals for quality and quantity of Reading Practice. Codes point out that he is At Risk.
 Engaged Time estimates minutes per day students are actively engaged in reading practice.

Student Record Report: This report provides a detailed summary of the student's reading practice on all quiz types.



Student Record Report
Printed Tuesday, December 1, 2009 1:15:12 PM

The Student Record Report collects data from all AR quiz types and compiles it for each student in one convenient report.

School: Oakwood Elementary School Reporting Period: 10/12/2009–11/25/2009 (Marking Period 2)

Bosley, Matthew
Grade: 4 Class: Grade 4 (Adams)
ID: BOSLM Teacher: Adams, Marcie

Track students' reading practice on four types of quizzes: Reading Practice, Vocabulary Practice, Literacy Skills, and Other Reading (Textbook) Quizzes.

Reading Practice – English

Date	Quiz Information				Questions			Points		ATOS BL		
	Number	Lang.	Title	F/NF	TVII	Corr.	Poss.	% Corr.	Earned		Poss.	
11/24/2009	53784	EN	Caleb's Story	F	I	10	10	100	2.0	2.0	2.9	
11/04/2009	55459	EN	Allosaurus (Dinosaurs)	NF	I	5	5	100	0.5	0.5	2.7	
10/29/2009	105257	EN	The Real Thing	F	I	5	5	100	0.5	0.5	2.6	
10/22/2009	5304	EN	Mystery Ranch	F	I	9	10	90	1.8	2.0	3.3	
10/20/2009	11420	EN	It Goes Eeeeeeeeeeeeeee!	F	I	9	10	90	0.9	1.0	2.9	
Quizzes Passed/Taken: 5/5									96	5.7	6.0	2.9 ⁴

Reading Practice – Spanish

Date	Quiz Information				Questions			Points		ATOS BL		
	Number	Lang.	Title	F/NF	TVII	Corr.	Poss.	%	Earned		Poss.	
11/19/2009	28782	SP	Bajo la Luna de Limón	F	I	5	5	100.0	0.5	0.5	2.9	
Quizzes Passed/Taken: 1/1												2.9 ⁴

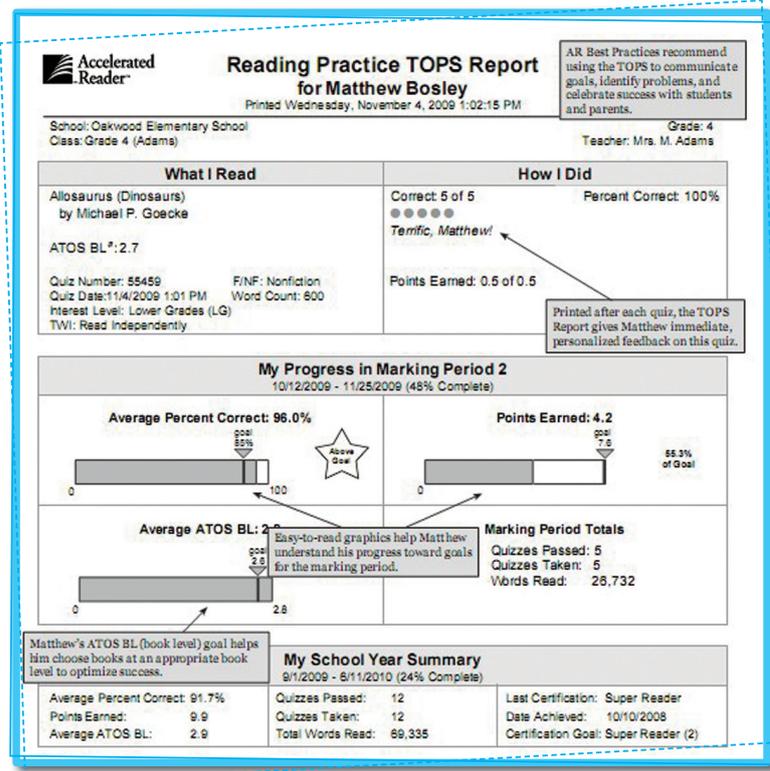
AR accommodates other readability formulas.

Vocabulary Practice

Date	Quiz Information			First-Try New			Second-Try New			Review Words			ATOS BL
	Number	Lang.	Title	Corr.	Poss.	%	Corr.	Poss.	%	Corr.	Poss.	%	
10/24/2009	5304	EN	Mystery Ranch	5	5	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.3
10/20/2009	11420	EN	It Goes Eeeeeeeeeeeeeee!	13	15	87	2	2	100	-	-	-	2.9
Quizzes Taken: 2				94			100						



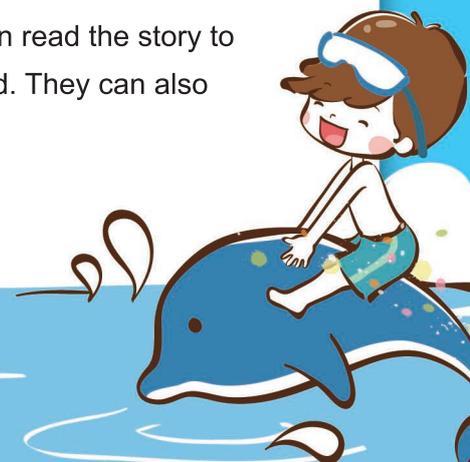
Reading Practice TOPS Report: This report helps you continuously monitor the progress of your students. It gives you and the student immediate feedback on a quiz the student has just taken.



How to Help Your Kids Score Better On Their AR Tests

As more schools participate in the AR Reading Program, more children are becoming stress out. Many schools include the AR Test results as the children final grade in their report card. But by following these tips, your child will be able to score better in their AR Tests.

- ★ Have your child choose an AR Book from his or her school AR Reading List, according to his or her suggested reading level.
- ★ Tell your child to write down short sentences about the main idea and the name of the characters of each page Correct as he or she reads.
- ★ When he or she is done with the book, go over these short sentences and ask him or her questions about the book.
- ★ You can also read the book with your child and role play the story together.
- ★ If you notice your child is not prepare to take the quiz or test, read the book again together.
- ★ You can take this opportunity to start a weekly AR Reading Book Club, with your child's classmates.
- ★ You can invite them to come over and offer them snacks. You can read the story to them and ask question as you read regarding what you have read. They can also participate by role playing a character from the story.



How to Make AR a Success in School Libraries

The Accelerated Reader, or AR, program can successfully mold good readers when school libraries use it with the right strategies. AR is used in many schools to promote independent reading and reading progress. It is not reading instruction but rather a supplementary program. Books are assigned levels and students select books matching their reading level. The student reads the book and takes a computer quiz to assess the student's comprehension.

- ★ Help students in their selection of an AR book. Students may spend too much time in the library searching for a book on their level and too little time reading. Making AR a success in the library means streamlining the selection process to maximize reading time.
- ★ Pair the AR program with a system of intangible incentives. The American Association of Librarians reports that students participating in the Accelerated Reader program are often motivated by external rewards. However, they recommend providing more internal motivators to students.
- ★ Allow students to occasionally read books outside of the AR system as a motivator. Reading should be intrinsically motivated by enjoyment of reading. According to research from the Journal of Literacy Research, students who read on a lower AR level, particularly boys, showed less motivation to read. If a student is progressing on their AR points, let them read an AR book out of their level or a book that is not on the AR list simply because they want to can feed that student's intrinsic motivation to read.
- ★ Increase silent reading time for all students. The American Association of School Librarians reports that an increase in silent reading time motivates readers and is a good predictor of reading success by the fifth grade.
- ★ Monitor the content of books chosen for the AR program. AR has books that may be on a lower reading level but the content may be more appropriate for slightly older readers. Monitoring is more important if the school library serves students from a wider range of grade levels.
- ★ Make AR one part of the overall reading experience in a school library. Such things as taking time to introduce particular books to groups of students and having fun furniture to sit on to read can contribute to children wanting to be in the library and participating in AR reading.



Conclusion

1. Current Status of English Learning in Taipei County

The tide of globalization is overwhelming. Language ability is a basic communication tool. More than a quarter of the population speaks English in the world. And all of the communications, especially the computer and Internet communication, are mostly in English. Therefore, Taipei County Governor Hsi-Wei Chou hopes that our children are given more opportunities to practice and use English from their childhood to cultivate their interests and confidence.

In order to cultivate students' global perspectives and competitiveness, Education Bureau of Taipei County promotes English learning in elementary schools and establishes projects to create a suitable English learning environment in elementary schools to connect to the world. Taipei County Government decided to have all the county's elementary school students take three extra English-related classes per week since August 2010. Besides, the Education Bureau has continued to hold events and activities including establishing the English Express Wonderland, purchasing English books and promoting reading comprehension, having professional training for English teachers, editing and publishing handbooks for remedial lessons, establishing learning proficiency index for English language and course outlines, and organizing international visits and exchanges.

2. English Reading in Taiwan is Different from AR

Teachers at elementary schools in Taiwan teach the same English picture/story book to the whole class at the Activation of elementary English courses. Students will read about 5-8 books within one year. The readability of each student is different so that they may say a book is too hard to read or too easy to read. This will decrease their interests in reading. It is extraordinarily different from AR program which gets students reading books at an optimum level for advancement based on their tested reading level.





3. Recommendation

I think the program of AR reading software can be implemented in Taiwan. Students will be motivated to read and promote their reading ability to the next higher grade. Firstly, students can read the books according to their reading levels and reduce their frustrations. Secondly, teachers can make good use of summary and analytic reports which are provided by AR to monitor both the quantity and quality of reading practice engaged by their students. Thirdly, teachers can assist students actively with the Diagnostic Report and TOPS Report. Moreover, parents will be aware of the children's learning conditions, and enhance the communication and cooperation with schools.

Before AR is implemented in Taiwan, I think we can try to make some changes. For example, to arouse students' interests in reading, teachers can let students read books based on their interests. In the process of reading, teachers should observe and assess every student so that they might suggest more challenging books and provide incentives for every student. Then, students will be willing to read and build a lifelong love of reading and learning.

Afterward

The two weeks training trip at L.A. gave me lots of brand-new ideas in teaching. I would like to thank Rosie, Mr. Hsu, the Hacienda La Puente Unified School District, and the Hsi Lai Temple for their kindness and generosity. And my deepest thanks go to Principal Lilia Picado, Ms. Elder, Ms. Jenny Chan, and the staff at Los Altos Elementary School. Many thanks for the hospitality you showed us. I'm really pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this event.

