

Introduction

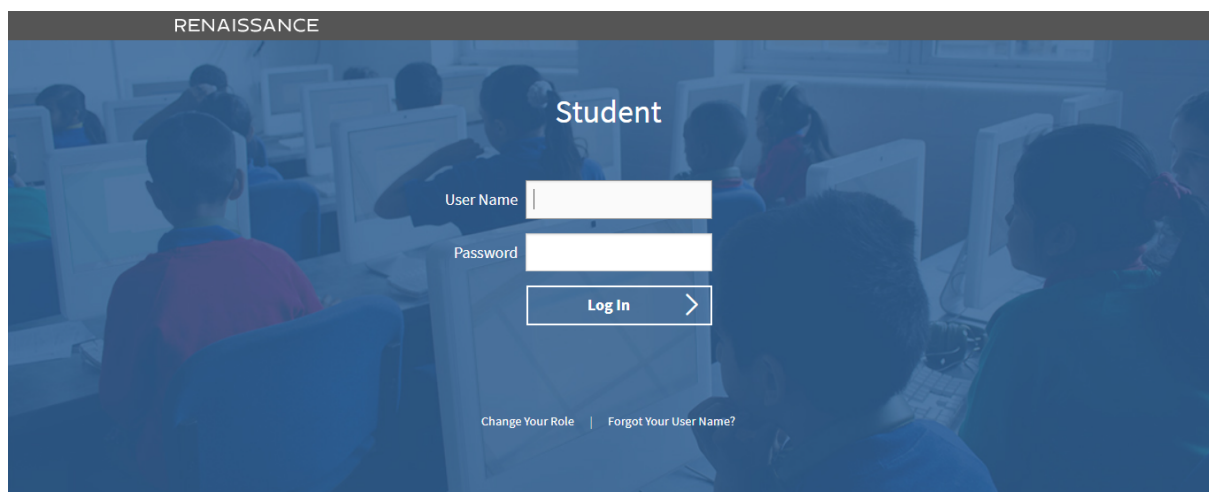
As you will no doubt be aware, we are a Read Write Inc. school and RWI provides us with a rigorous and effective approach to teaching reading and early literacy skills, which delivers high standards (as shown in the % of children passing the national phonics test in Y1 - which at over 90%, puts us well ahead of the national average).

We are focusing this year on further enhancing our provision for reading in KS2 and in order to support this focus, we researched a number of reading programs that would help develop a culture of 'reading for pleasure', as well as allowing staff, parents and pupils to monitor progress and attainment. Accelerated Reader allows The Firs to achieve this.

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. Your child will choose books that are at an appropriate reading level for them. 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.



How does Accelerated Reader work?

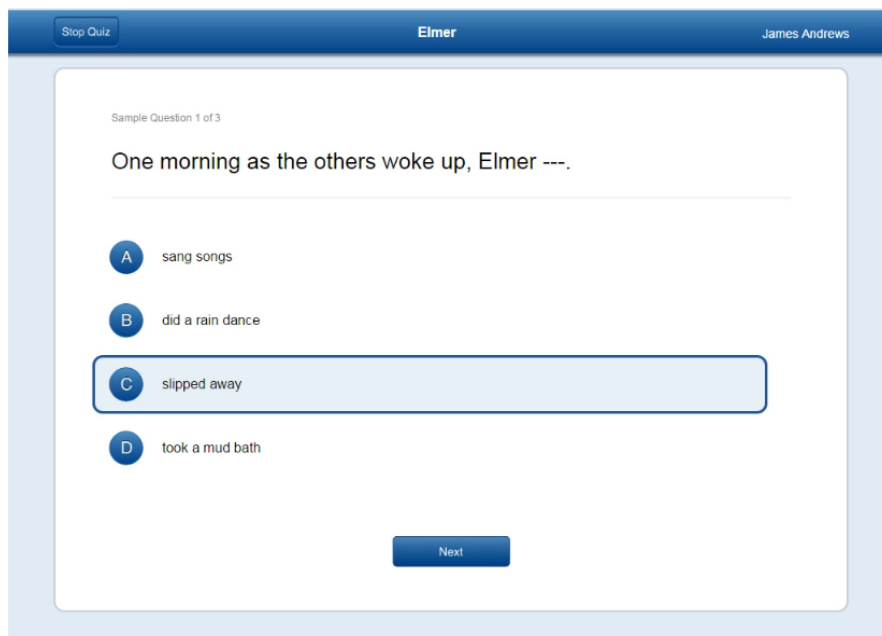
Key Stage 2 children will take a STAR Reading assessment that uses computer-adaptive technology. Questions continually adjust to your child's responses. If the child's response is correct, the difficulty level is increased. If incorrect or if the child misses a question, the difficulty level is reduced. The test uses multiple-choice questions and takes approximately 20 minutes to complete.



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 or Zone of Proximal Development) and how children can be supported to improve their reading comprehension.

The 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.

After completing the STAR Reading Test, your child picks a book at their own level (using the Book Level (BL) number on the spine and on the sticker inside) and reads it at their own pace. When finished, your child is then able to take a short quiz on the computer or chrome book in school. Time will be made available every day for children to complete Accelerated Reader quizzes. (Passing the quiz is an indication that your child understood what was read.)



Accelerated Reader gives children and teachers feedback based on the quiz results, which the teacher then uses to help your child set goals and direct on-going reading practice.

Staff will help your child choose books at an appropriate BL that are challenging without being frustrating, ensuring that your child can pass the quiz and experience success. If your child does not do well on the quiz, the teacher may help your child:

- Choose another book that is more appropriate.
- Ask more probing questions as your child reads and before your child takes a quiz.
- Pair your child with another child, or even have the book read to your child.

AR is used extensively, both in this country and abroad and in most cases, children really enjoy taking the quizzes. Since they're reading books at their 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. An added bonus for the children is that they get the points the book is worth allocated to them when they pass the quiz! (There is more about points below).

According to research, children who read about 30 minutes or more a day with a 90% comprehension rate (average percent correct) on AR quizzes see the greatest reading gains. Therefore, we want our children to have at least **30 minutes** set aside for reading during each day. At The Firs we have timetabled a 'Accelerated Reading Time for **15 minutes** during the school day. Each child is then expected to **read at home for 15 minutes each day** and support with this will be **critical** in helping your child to make the best progress they can.



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. When reading together, stop and ask questions to be sure your child is comprehending what is read. Reading with your child, no matter what the child's age, is an important part of developing a good reader, building a lifelong love of reading.

Please don't be concerned that children will be compared with each other. Accelerated Reader allows Firs staff to work with each child individually. Children are encouraged to progress at their own pace and set their own goals with the help of the teacher. The aim of Accelerated Reader is for all children to succeed in achieving their own personal goals.

How is my child's goal / target set?

Accelerated Reader goals are set using a points system. Goals / targets are set using a child's ZPD level and the time provided for reading practice, this ensures each child's target is personalised and relevant to their individual ability in reading. Each child will receive a new personalised target after each STAR TEST. Children are able to track their progress each time they log in to Accelerated Reader and through their TOPS (The Opportunity to Praise Students) report (That is created after completing a quiz).

How are book points allocated? Every book that has an Accelerated Reading Practice Quiz is given a point value. Points are computed based on the difficulty of the book (ATOS readability level) and the length of the book (number of words).

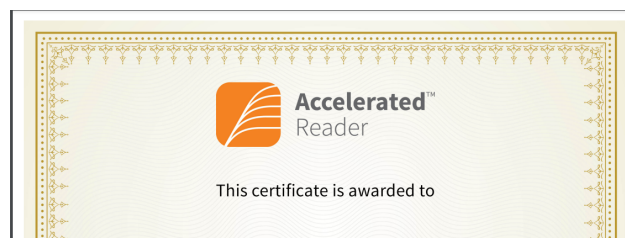
For example, the Horrid Henry books, which are about 5,135 words long and have an average ATOS book level of 3.3, are 1.0-point books. Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone is 77,325 words long and has an average ATOS book level of 6.0, is a 12-point book.

Children earn points, or a portion of a book's points, depending on how well they do on the Reading Practice Quiz. For example, a child 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%), etc. A child 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. For quizzes with 3, 5, or 10 questions, a child needs to pass a quiz with a score of 60% or higher to earn points. For quizzes with 20 questions, a child needs to pass with a score of 70% or higher to earn points.

There are over 160,000 Accelerated Reader quizzes available!!!

Celebrating Achievements

We want to make Accelerated Reader fun and celebrate children's effort and success, to motivate them to try their best. For this reason, we will over time, be introducing a range of reward arrangements.



Initially, we will be starting with:

- Children will work every term to achieve one of the special **Accelerated Reader achievement certificates**.
- Children making a good effort or achieving / making great progress towards their termly goals and/or target points, will be nominated by their teacher for our new '**Reading Megastars**' display board.

How can parents/carers be involved?

At The Firs we strive to ensure parents and carers are an integral part of their child's learning. Please share reading with your child regularly regardless of their age or ability. (**15 minutes a day** is the target). Use their personalised reading diaries ('Fish Book') to record key points about your child's reading, such as comprehension questions your child answered about the book or the meanings of words you discussed etc.

If teaching staff have a particular concern regarding your child's progress they will endeavour to contact parents directly. Parents are always welcome to speak to class teachers to check how well their child is progressing across the term.

Can I use my child's ZPD when buying books for them at home?

If you wish to help your child select books within their ZPD then visit www.arbookfind.co.uk and click on **Advanced Search**. By conducting an advanced search, you can generate book lists that contain titles based on the criteria you enter such as book level, topic, interest level, fiction/nonfiction, etc. This is a great idea when looking for presents!

My child already does well in school. Why do they need this?

Even if a child is gifted at playing a musical instrument, they have to practice to develop their talent. Very able children, like all children, need to be challenged. Teachers using Accelerated Reader are able to guide each pupil to books that give the child both challenge and success, regardless of the child's level.

My child is not a strong reader. Can they still use Accelerated Reader?

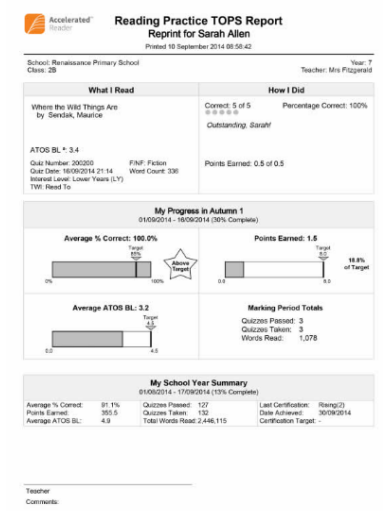
Accelerated Reader helps all children become better readers, from children with special needs to those who are gifted and talented. When children read books at an appropriate level, they experience success. Furthermore, staff work with children to set appropriate goals based on each child's reading level.

How will my child take a quiz?

There are two different ways students can take Accelerated Reader quizzes at school: on a computer or chrome book. Quizzing from home is not permitted. Time is allocated each school day for children to take quizzes when they have completed a book. Our aim is for children to take a quiz as soon as possible after completing their book (and within 24 hours where possible). Children will be taking quizzes of books they have partly read at home, so they should make sure they have read and understood each book before completing the linked quiz.

How will I know how my child is doing?

A TOPS Report is available after a child takes a quiz to give you feedback on your child's understanding of the book and shows cumulative data for the marking period and school year. The TOPS Report may be sent home with your child.



A Tried and Tested Programme

'Decades of reading research has identified the best practices that transform "regular reading" into high-quality reading practice that sends growth soaring. Accelerated Reader helps educators, students, and their families put these practices into action—and more than 30 years of research prove Accelerated Reader is highly effective at raising reading achievement for students of all ability levels.'

[Study Concerning the Impact of Accelerated Reader](#)