ACCELERATED READER: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

What is Accelerated Reader?

Accelerated Reader (AR) is a computer program that helps teachers manage and monitor children's independent reading practice. Your child picks a book at their own level and reads it at their own pace. When finished, your child takes a short quiz on the computer.

Children using Accelerated Reader choose their own books to read, rather than having one assigned to them. This makes reading a much more enjoyable experience as they can choose books that are interesting to them.

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.

How does Accelerated Reader work?

Our 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 the child misses a question, the difficulty level is reduced. The test uses multiple-choice questions and it 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) and how children can be supported to improve their reading comprehension.

Your child then picks a book at their own level and reads it at their own pace. When finished, your child is then able to take a short quiz on the computer or iPad. Time is available every day for children to complete their Accelerated Reader quizzes. (Passing the quiz is an indication that your child understood what was read.)

According to research, children who read at least 35 minutes a day with a 90% comprehension rate (average percent correct) on AR quizzes see the greatest gains. Therefore, your child should have at least 35 minutes set aside for reading during each school day. At Diamond Hall we have timetabled an Accelerated Reader session in school each day for 20 minutes. Each child is then expected to read at home for 15 minutes each day. As with anything, performance improves with practice.

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 goal / target at the start of each term. Children can track their progress each time they log in to Accelerated Reader. This is also displayed in their classroom accelerated reading display where pupils are responsible for monitoring their own progress too.

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 Accelerated 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:

At the re-launch of Accelerated Reader in 2019, we shared with the children that we wished to reward those children who achieved their goal / target points at the end of each school term. Each class worked with their class teacher to decide on how their class wished to celebrate. This included movie afternoons, extra playtimes, gift vouchers etc. Every child who achieves their goal will be invited to attend the party or event. Staff in school will closely monitor children across the term to ensure they are on track to achieve their goal / target by the end of the term. We also award weekly 'Reader of the Week' certificates to pupils from each class as well as having our very own 'Accelerated Readerboard' (see below) where each class are in competition to find out which class is most successful in achieving the highest percentage of scores from their quizzes.

How can parents/carers be involved?

At Diamond Hall Junior Academy we strive to ensure parents are an integral part of their child's learning. Please share reading with your child regularly regardless of their age or ability. 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 bookstore on a regular basis, letting your child see you reading, and discussing books that each of you has read. When reading with your child, stop and ask questions to be sure your child comprehends 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 and learning, and creating a loving relationship between you and your child. Make learning a family affair!

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. Gifted 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 pupils with special needs to those who are gifted and talented. When children read books at an appropriate level, they experience success. Furthermore, teachers and librarians 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 pupils can take Accelerated Reader quizzes at school: on the computer or on a mobile device. Time is allocated each school day for children to take quizzes when they have completed a book. Your child needs to take a quiz within 24 hours of completing their book where possible. Children may take quizzes of books they have read at home but should make sure they have read and understood each book before completing a quiz.

How has COVID19 affected Accelerated Reader?

With the temporary closure of our school library, it has meant that our pupils have been unable to take books home like they have previously. As a result of this, Diamond Hall invested in a new online reading platform called MYON. This website works effectively alongside Accelerated Reader. MYON allows every pupil unlimited access to an enhanced digital library of both fiction and non-fiction books twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Instead of pupils reading books from the library, they are now able to read them online. Once children have read a book, they can still take the Accelerated Reader Quiz as they have in the past.

Since March 2019, staff, pupils and parents have all fully engaged in these changes that have been forced upon us and we will continue to strive for what is best for our pupils at Diamond Hall. Reading is and will continue to be of great importance to our school.