Brymore
experience to last a lifetime

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Dear Parent/Guardian

At Brymore we are dedicated to ensuring the best possible outcomes for all of our students. With this in mind, we are excited to be using a programme called Accelerated Reader with students in Years 7, 8 and 9. This will support the development of students' literacy skills with a view to maximise their chances of success at key stage 4. As you are aware, literacy is fundamental in: raising achievement, raising attainment, developing confidence in academic ability, increasing self-esteem and developing the 3Rs in the classroom. The enclosed information sheet gives you more information about how the programme works.

The use of Accelerated Reader is part of our whole school focus of improving literacy across the curriculum. The texts that students will study at GCSE in English are significantly more challenging under the new 9-1 regime, and in order to confidently access most exam papers, students will need a reading age of at least 16 years. Unfortunately, many of our students have not reached this level by the time they start their GCSEs. Accelerated Reader will help accelerate students' progress towards this goal.

Research into literacy levels in the UK present some harsh realities:

- Statistics from 2014 show that one in five children in England cannot read well by the age of 11.
- Research conducted in 2012 found that 17% of 15 year-olds in England do not have a minimum level of proficiency in literacy.
- England is the only country where 16-24 year olds have lower literacy and numeracy skills than 55-65 year-olds, out of 24 OECD countries.
- Low levels of literacy cost the UK an estimated £81 billion a year in lost earnings and increased welfare spending, impacting on 'the success of the economy as a whole'.
- 16% of adults (around 5.8 million people) in England and Northern Ireland score at the lowest level of proficiency in literacy (at or below Level 1).
- 16 year-olds who choose to read books for pleasure outside of school are more likely to secure managerial or professional jobs in later life.
- In England and Northern Ireland the median hourly wage of workers with the highest levels of literacy is 94% higher than for workers who have the lowest levels of literacy.

Yet despite these facts, most children in England do not read on a daily basis: in 2011 just over a third (37%) of 10 year-olds surveyed reported reading for pleasure every day. The problem is heightened amongst boys who traditionally do not see reading as a pastime of choice.

Our mission is to create a culture of reading amongst our students; to encourage them to see reading as something enjoyable. By using the data AR provides us we can show them that they can progress and be successful in an area that maybe traditionally they have struggled in. If students commit to reading just 20-30 minutes a day it will have a significant impact on their progress.

All students in KS3 have been issued with a yellow reading journal. This acts as a point of discussion with his English teacher in his weekly reading lessons to check his progress. Students can also use these lessons to access quizzes if they have finished their books. Rooms 4 and 5 are also open every lunchtime and after school if students wish to come and take a quiz. Students who we feel are not committed to their daily reading will be invited to attend catch up sessions with their English teacher at lunch times.

Should you have any questions about Accelerated Reader, or your son's progress with his reading, please contact his English teacher or myself directly. As ever, thank you for your support at this important time in your son's education.

Yours faithfully

Jayne Taylor-Lane
Head of English

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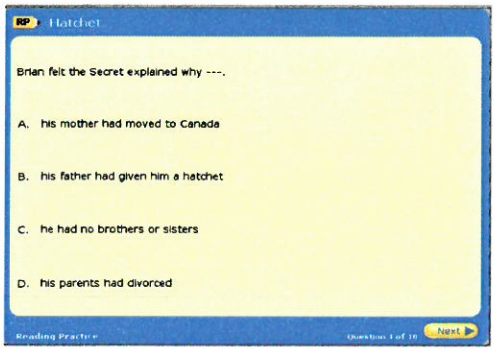
A Parent's Guide to Accelerated Reader™

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.

Teachers may assist pupils by:
- Guiding them to books appropriate to their ability and interests
- Asking probing questions as your child reads and before quizzing
- Pairing your child with others, reading with or reading to your child.



Since they are reading books at their own reading and interest levels, most children are likely to be successful and enjoy the books and quizzes. Best of all they learn and grow at their own pace.

How can I help my child become a better reader?

As with anything, performance improves with practice. According to Renaissance Learning's research, children who read at least 20 minutes a day with a 90% comprehension rate on AR quizzes see the greatest gains. Encourage your child to read at home, discuss books, ask questions about what they have read and visit your local library.

What is a STAR Reading test?

STAR Reading is used to determine your child's reading level. It 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?

Book Levels are reported using the ATOS™ readability formula and represent the difficulty of the text. The levels range from 0.5–13.5. Books are chosen based on the ZPD range recommended for each pupil by STAR Reading.

What is a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)?

ZPD is the range of books that will challenge a child without causing frustration or loss of motivation. Your child will receive a ZPD, or reading range after taking a STAR Reading test. It is important for children to read with a high degree of comprehension and within his/her ZPD.

What are points?

Every book that has an AR Reading Practice Quiz is given a points value. AR points are based on the length of the book (number of words). Pupils earn a percentage of points according to how well they pass the quiz.

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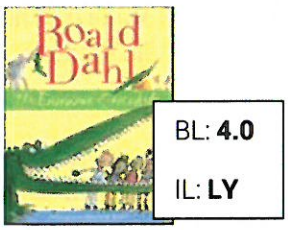
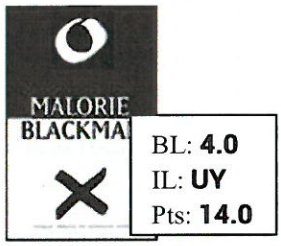
What is Interest Level?

The Interest level indicates for which age group a book is appropriate, based on the content and themes. These are recommendations only and teachers and parents are recommended to use their best judgement when guiding pupils.

Interest Level	Age
LY—Lower Years	5 - 8
MY—Middle Years	9 - 13
UY—Upper Years	14+





The examples above have a book level of 4.0 since both have short sentences and vocabulary that is simple. However, Noughts and Crosses is intended for older pupils - Upper Years, while The Enormous Crocodile is Lower Years.

How can I find further information?

Your school will inform you about finding out your child's progress, for example through TOPS reports instant feedback and the Home Connect website. Visit AR BookFinder at www.arbookfind.co.uk to conduct a search of all available books with AR quizzes. Visit Renaissance Learning for more product information, www.renlearn.co.uk.

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