

# **Maple Creek**

## **Accelerated Reader**

### **What is Accelerated Reader (AR)?**

The Accelerated Reader (AR) Program is an individualized reading enrichment program. As an individualized reading program, it is designed to motivate students to read more. It is not a competitive program, but one that enhances student's reading ability and enriches reading experiences and comprehension.

### **How does AR work?**

Students select a book in their reading range (zone of proximal development) as determined by the STAR test given to them every quarter. They read it at their own pace, and then take an independent comprehension test on the computer. Each book is worth a certain number of points based on its length and reading level. Students get a percentage of these points based on how many of the test questions they answer correctly. The program tracks their progress over the course of the school year.

### **How does a student get started?**

At the beginning of each quarter a STAR test is given to identify a student's independent reading level.

### **Does my child have to read within this reading range?**

The reading range is called the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The best reading practice should be done within the ZPD. If students read material that is too easy, then there will be no gain in reading skills. If they read material that is too difficult, they will become frustrated and achieve no improvement in reading skills. Therefore, we require that reading be within students' ZPD range.

### **How does my child select a book within his ZPD Range?**

Each AR book in our library has a color-coded star on its spine and a label with the reading level written on it. Some point values are also noted on the spine label. Each book has a point value based on readability and total number of words in the book. The points, level and quiz # are either on the spine or inside front cover.

### **Does my child have to read AR books only?**

As the quarter starts, students are encouraged to read books at their zone of proximal development. Research shows that if students read within their zone of proximal development it helps them to grow in their reading skills. Our goal is to motivate students to read more and to enrich their reading experiences. We recognize that libraries are filled with good literature and not every good book is an AR book. Therefore, we encourage students to read both AR and non-AR books when they have reached their grade level points. The computer keeps track of AR reading points, books, and average test scores, as well as other diagnostic data. With this information, we can help students balance their reading selections with both AR and non-AR books.

### **STAR Reader Award**

STAR reader is a quarterly award that students can earn. In order to meet the criteria for the STAR reader award, students must meet the STAR reader goal earning the designated points for their current grade level. In addition, they must achieve an average of 85% on AR quizzes. Students take quizzes independently and without the assistance of an adult (teacher, parent, siblings).

Ideally, students are pacing themselves with books throughout the quarter to be successful toward earning STAR reader.

### **How much time should my child spend reading?**

It is recommended that students read independently, with a buddy, or have someone read to them. Below is a chart of recommended average minutes that should be spent on reading each day.

General Guidelines (minutes per day)

<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Read To</b>	<b>Student Read Aloud</b>	<b>Read Independently</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	20	20	10
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	15	10	35
3 <sup>rd</sup> and up	5 to 15	5 to 15	45

### **What constitutes a good AR score?**

The goal is to score at 85% or above. Scoring lower may indicate that the material is too difficult, and the student should select a book at the lower end of his/her reading level. A student who scores at 95% or above should select a book at the upper end of his/her reading range. If students are already reading at the top of their reading range and consistently scoring above 95%, then their reading range should be adjusted.

### **When does my child take a test?**

Ideally an AR test should be taken within 24 hours of the time the student finishes reading the book. The questions are designed to verify that the student has read the book, so they are directed more to details of the story element. Teachers usually have AR time during their class library time, students have access to test on student computers in their classroom and we hold an AR night once per quarter. Quizzes must be taken at school with a teacher or staff present. Quizzes may only be taken one time per book (no retakes).

### **How can I support and encourage my child to read at home?**

**Read Together.** Children feel special when they are reading next to their parents/grandparents. As children learn to read, take turns turning pages. Once a habit of reading together is established, parents can sit nearby as older children read their own books.

**Read to your child.** Children enjoy hearing stories and talking about them long after they can read for themselves.

**Find good books to read.** Encourage your child to read within his/her reading range. You can check books out at the public library (check Renaissance Place to see if they are AR) and take the AR test at our school. Mark books at home that are AR with the level and points.

**Make a time and place for reading.** The American child watches an average of three hours of TV a day. It shouldn't be too hard to find some time every day to read. Many parents find that bedtime is ideal.

**Set an example.** Children copy what they see. When a parent turns off the TV and reads a newspaper, a magazine, or a book, the child learns that reading is important.

**Help children become active readers.** As you read together, share ideas and ask questions: What do you think will happen next? As children get older ask questions about what they read on their own. When they tell you the story, they learn to organize and remember the information.

**Sign Up to receive notices from AR.** You can sign up to receive notices of tests taken and monitor progress by going to the home connect link <https://Hosted66.renlearn.com/277172/HomeConnect>

## **How will Accelerated Reader help my child with reading?**

The Accelerated Reader Program enables a child to gradually increase both the difficulty and comprehension of material read. This will not only help increase reading scores, but more importantly, enjoyment of reading.

## **What is Renaissance Place?**

Renaissance Place is the new version of the Accelerated Reader program. The program has a special feature called Home Connect. Home Connect is a fun, easy-to-understand web-based interface that allows the students, parents and teachers to share in the educational experience by viewing progress in certain Renaissance Place programs while outside of the school.

You can view Home Connect from any computer with an Internet connection using these browsers:

\*Internet Explorer 6.02 or later

\*Firefox 1.5 or later

\*Safari 2.0.3 or later

Each child received a User Name & Password. If you misplace your user name or password, please contact Mrs. Johnston (currently serving in her absence Mrs. Cameron).

To log into Home Connect:

\*Web site: <https://Hosted66.renlearn.com/277172/HomeConnect>

In Home Connect you can also:

\*Click **Email Setup** to sign up to receive emails showing your student's quiz or test results.

\*Click **Help** to get answers to your questions about Home Connect.

## **AR BookFinder Quick Link**

Help your child search for appropriate books based on his/her interests and ZPD at: <http://www.arbookfind.com/default.aspx>.