



Supporting your child with Literacy



“Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. Literacy is the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realise his or her full potential.”

Kofi Annan – Secretary-General of the United Nations 1997-2006



The Accelerated Reader Programme

'The more you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go'. (Dr. Seuss)

Why is reading important for us and our students?

We all understand the importance of reading and how it can have dramatic effects on children; both during their school career and into their adult lives.

- One in six people in the UK will leave school still struggling with literacy – with a reading age below 11.
- These adults are less likely to be in full-time employment at the age of 30.
- Many students with low levels of literacy find sticking to guidelines and concentrating very difficult.

Reading is essential across the curriculum. Research shows that if young people read for pleasure:

- Their vocabulary, reading attainment and writing ability increases;
- They have a greater ability to access GCSE exam texts;
- They have increased general knowledge and understanding of other cultures;
- This could affect their basic understanding of the questions on an exam paper, which they will have to decode and interpret unaided.

We are setting high, aspirational reading targets for all our students

Assessing and monitoring reading

A student's ability to read can traditionally be difficult for us to track because it is the combination of a number of skills. Hearing a student read out loud assesses their physical ability to form the phonics confidently but tells us nothing about their understanding of the words.

There is often little organisation in the way students choose books to read. What they are selecting is either too difficult and beyond their comprehension or too easy and fails to challenge.

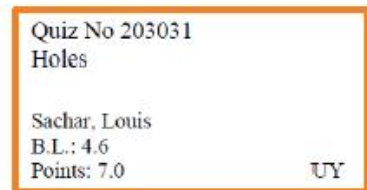
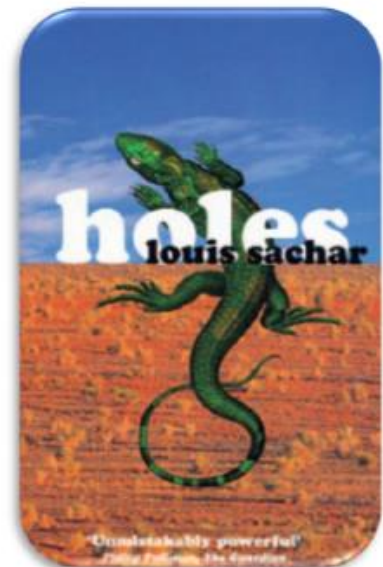
How will Accelerated Reader help with this?

The Accelerated Reader programme allows us to monitor, with accuracy, the reading level and progress of each of our students. It assesses not just their ability to physically read, but their understanding of the text they are reading. It will also structure their reading to transition them towards the next level.

This works through:

Book difficulty grading

The books in our library have been coded by difficulty, so that students can easily find something that is in line with their current reading level. The system will also make recommendations based on books they may enjoy.



STAR tests

Each student completes a STAR test at the start of the programme and every term thereafter. This is a multiple-choice test which adapts to the answers it is given to push the students to the best of their ability. A report is generated which includes their reading age and the difficulty at which they should be reading (ZPD).

Book quizzes

After completing a book, students then complete a quiz. This has 5, 10 or 20 multiple choice questions (depending on the difficulty of the book read) and tests their understanding of what they have just read. We monitor the outcome to ensure they are performing as they should be. This allows an opportunity to praise and reward students who are reading well – both those who are naturally able and those who are working hard.

Making time for reading

To show the value of reading we are giving Year 7 students 15 minutes reading time a day. This will be on a rolling timetable so it falls in a different lesson daily, with teachers from every subject reading with the students.

Encouraging your child with Accelerated Reader Home Connect

The Accelerated Reader Programme has a feature which allows parents to have a snapshot of their child's progress. This includes average percentage scores on quizzes, the number of points earned and their latest results. You are also able to register an e-mail address to get updates, search for book suggestions and see how close they are towards their target.

Log in information:

Weblink: [\(Insert your Academy's weblink to home connect here\)](#)

Username is your child's AR login code.

Password is your child's AR password.

You will be provided with a personalised letter which contains your login details.

The central screenshot shows the Renaissance Home Connect™ dashboard for a user named Lauren Bennett. It includes sections for 'My Overall Progress' (Quizzes: 87.5%, Points: 9.2, ATOS Book Level: 4.0), 'My Last Quiz' (30 of 10 Correct, 2.0 of 2.0 Points), 'Reader Certifications', and 'Find Books' with the AR BookFinder logo. A navigation bar at the top has 'reading' and 'maths' tabs.

Callout 1 (Top Right): Email Setup form with fields for First Name, Email, and Notify Email, and a 'Send' button. Text: "You have the option to receive email notifications at home or at work when your child has completed an Accelerated Reader Quiz."

Callout 2 (Middle Right): 'My Words Learned' table showing a list of words and their scores. Text: "This screen provides a list of words learned and results on your child's latest Vocabulary Practice Quiz."

Callout 3 (Bottom Right): 'My Reading Practice Quizzes' section with a 'Current Marking Period' dropdown menu. Text: "Your child's progress toward reading targets can be monitored by either marking period or school year by using the drop-down menu."

Callout 4 (Bottom Center): AR BookFinder search interface. Text: "Renaissance Home Connect links to AR BookFinder, the new online search tool that makes it easy for you and your child to search for the next AR book to read."

Callout 5 (Bottom Left): 'My Bookshelf' section displaying book covers. Text: "This screen enables you and your child to see all the books the child has read. By clicking on a book cover, you can get details on the book such as ATOS book level, word count, points and more."

Advice to encourage reading

- Make time for reading. Although 15 minutes will help, the more time students spend reading the more progress they will make.
- Ensure your child has their book every day. Making sure they have it will help them get into, enjoy the book and complete quizzes.
- Be involved! Either using Home Connect, reading together and talking about reading. Male reading role models are really helpful!
- Show your teenager that it is as much fun to read a book as it is to watch TV or play on the computer.
- Create a quiet, well-lit space in your home to encourage reading.
- Make sure that your home contains books that will interest your teenager.
- Encourage your teenager to read magazines, newspapers or the sports guide. Leave them around your home. It doesn't really matter what your child reads as long as they read!
- Subscribe to a magazine that your teenager has an interest in.
- Share articles you've read from the newspaper or a magazine, especially if it's something your teenager is interested in. Sunday supplements are particularly good.
- Play audio books in the car. This will encourage reading for enjoyment.
- Recommend adult-themed books that would be appropriate.
- Link books and reading to films at the cinema or video games they know.
- Introduce books which are part of a series, and biographies.
- Ask teenagers to recommend books for younger readers in the family.
- Make use of e-books and e-book readers such as Kindles.

Spelling Strategies

- Break it into sounds (u-n-i-o-n)
- Break it into syllables (con-tin-ent)
- Break it into affixes (dis + satisfy)
- Use a mnemonic (Never Eat Chips Eat Salad Sandwiches And Remain Young!)
- Refer to a word in the same family (chemical, chemist, chemistry)
- Over-articulate it (Wed-nes-day)
- Words within words (GUM in argument)
- Refer to word history (bi = two, cycle = wheels)
- Apply spelling rules (hopping = short vowel sound, hoping = long vowel)
- Learn by sight (look-say-cover-write check)
- Visual memory (recall images, colour, font)
- Use a dictionary
- Create word banks of useful words
- Make word and definition cards
- Create interactive glossaries that your child adds to during units.
- Make crosswords/wordsearches
- Play word games - hangman, dominoes, finding words in words



Checking work for literacy

- *Always find something good to say about your child's efforts at the start.* This should be a positive and encouraging experience.
- *Focus on one or two of the key elements at a time.* Correcting every mistake will be both overwhelming and demoralising.
- *Use a bright colour.*
- *Try highlighting, under-lining or circling the error.* Ask your son/daughter to identify why you have highlighted certain aspects. Getting them to work it out rather than simply telling them will be more effective in the long term.
- *Encourage them to re-write the work after you have edited it.* You could then re-edit if you feel necessary. In Year 7 one edit is sufficient, but as they progress up the school several drafts may be required.



The 5 Key Elements

1	CAPITAL LETTERS A key problem area is failing to use capital letters for names, places and sentence starters.
2	FULL STOPS Encourage reading aloud. This will help them understand that punctuation lets them breathe. Many students write entire paragraphs without using a single full stop. You can then talk about using commas to break up a long sentence and add meaning.
3	SPELLING Correct a couple of words. Focus on common mistakes e.g. there, their, they're, or subject specific words e.g. reign, parliament etc. Text language is creeping in to written work - LOL! Beware spell checkers that use American spellings, try a .co.uk site.
4	VOCABULARY Encourage the use of dictionaries and thesaurus to increase the range and complexity of vocabulary e.g. look for alternatives to "said and went". Basic sentences can be made more interesting by asking <i>who, what, where, when?</i>
5	PARAGRAPHS Use these to break writing up into smaller sections. Think of them as headings but without the heading!



Advice to encourage writing

- Read your child's exercise books with them and discuss the writing they have done.
- Encourage your child to check their written work carefully. It should be checked for accuracy and for use of interesting language and devices. A piece of written work is not finished until it has been proofread!
- The key to good writing is VARIETY: variety in punctuation, variety in sentence structure and variety in vocabulary.
- Encourage your child to use both a thesaurus and a dictionary. They will need both, especially if they use an online thesaurus as the new word might not make sense in the context they are using it.
- Be an audience for their writing, feeding back on the impact their writing has had on you.
- Take an interest in what they write in other subject areas at school.
- Share newspaper, magazine articles or web texts that are written in interesting or engaging ways and explore how they might use these ideas in their own writing.
- Spontaneous spelling tests are a good idea, especially on long car journeys!
- Encourage them to write to influence people through posting or emailing their reactions and ideas on current affairs and local issues, for example, emailing politicians, commenting or having their own blog, writing for a community, sports or other interest group newsletter or website.
- Encourage them to continue to write for pleasure in whatever form they enjoy and experiment further, for example, extend fiction writing to drafting a script for a play or film.

Advice to encourage speaking, oracy and communication

- Encourage your child to talk to you and others in your family about challenging topics. Use items in the news, on television or from their reading to talk about controversial issues. Encourage them to think about other ways of looking at things and consider other viewpoints.
- When your child has a Speaking and Listening assessment encourage them to prepare thoroughly and practice what they want to say. If they are confident enough they could practice in front of you as an audience.
- Encourage them to think about how they speak in different situations and to use an appropriate language in assessed situations. They should practice speaking in a more formal tone without using slang, "like" or too many "ers" and "ums".
- Talk to your children whenever you can! It's true that in busy households it's becoming more and more difficult for families to spend quality time talking in a reflective way about what everyone's been doing. Mealtimes can often be the best time for families to get together like this.
- Help your children to develop their vocabulary by suggesting better words they might have used in your conversations, in a constructive and friendly way!
- Encourage them to take part in activities that involve presenting to an audience, such as a school assembly, parents evening, etc.
- Discuss topical subjects of concern with them, for example, health issues such as diet, drugs and alcohol.
- Encourage them to take part in social activities to broaden their experience of using talk, for example, drama groups, making and performing music with others, and taking part in voluntary or charity work.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to get in touch with