

Accelerated Reader (AR) Handbook



Accelerated Reader (AR) is used at SJCS to help our students improve their reading ability, enjoyment, and comprehension by engaging them in outside reading and checking for understanding on that reading through online quizzes. The program is available as a Web Database with students able to access the quiz for any available title from campus computers. The URL www.arbookfind.com lists the reading level and points of over 100,000 titles. Books are available in the school library, or parents can assist their student in selecting a title from their local library or store.

Introduction to Accelerated Reader

Reading, like any skill, requires both instruction and practice, but practice is not guaranteed to help students unless it is done correctly. Trainers at the gym design individualized programs to help people reach their goals, and we seek to do the same for our students. On a quarterly basis, SJCS students will take the **STAR Reading Assessment**, which will determine their individual reading levels and provide us with the information we need to create personalized reading goals for each student.

Proper book choices will be engaging and challenging, while also understandable for students. When making book choices, several factors come into play:

- 1) **Book Level:** Book level is a measurement of the “readability” of a book, judging its sentence structure, word length, and grammatical complexity. You will find book level expressed by grade (ex. - a score of 4.5 indicates a book with text that could be read by a student with a reading level equivalent that of a 4th grader during the 5th month of school). Please note that most pleasure reading tops out at a 5th or 6th grade book level, so it is entirely possible that as your students get older, they will be reading books below their actual reading level or grade level. This is totally acceptable, as most books that are written at the higher levels are textbooks or manuals of some type.
- 2) **Interest Level:** Interest level measures the themes and ideas in a book. Some books with short sentences and less-difficult words are still geared to older readers in terms of their content. *The Catcher in the Rye*, for instance, is written at a 4.7 book level, but the content and themes are definitely only appropriate for more mature readers. By the same token, books intended for younger children can vary significantly in terms of their word and sentence complexity. Interest level is expressed in more general terms than book level: “LG” for lower grades (K-3), “MG” for middle grades (4-8), MG+ (grades 6 and up), and “UG” for upper grades (9-12).
- 3) **Points:** Points are determined for each AR book based on its length and grammatical difficulty. Points do not determine the intellectual or artistic value of a book. For example, a Shakespearean play would be worth far fewer points than a John Grisham thriller simply because it has far fewer words. This doesn’t mean that AR believes the Grisham book to be of greater literary value than Shakespeare. AR measures student practice with points because they are the easiest way to determine how much volume of reading a student has done.

The quarterly STAR Assessments will determine each student’s reading level and **Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**: a range of book levels from which the student should be choosing to provide the best practice. This range may extend both above and below the student’s current reading level because “**Reading Level**” indicates the *highest* level at which a student can perform but not necessarily the level at which they can read comfortably for hours.

The single most important factor in a student’s reading improvement is **comprehension**, and the best growth occurs when students are reading books that allow them to answer a minimum of 85%-90% of the questions correctly on the AR quizzes. That is why it is important for teachers and parents to help students choose appropriate books based on their ZPD and the three factors listed above.

Based on their reading level and ZPD, students will receive personalized **reading goals** showing how many points the student should try to accumulate from appropriate books during a quarter in order to be improving as a reader. Teachers will work to adjust these goals even more for emerging readers or high-ability readers.

Individual Grade-Level Guidelines for AR

Early Grades (1-2):

1st Grade

1. AR is not part of the students' reading grade.
2. Goals for 1st Grade AR
 - Q1: No AR. Reading Log provided.
 - The teacher sends home a Reading Log for parents to record the titles of books, along with the number of minutes read.
 - Q2: Teaching the process of the AR with a set goal.
 - The teacher sends home an AR Reading Log for parents to record the title of book and number of times the book was read prior to taking an AR quiz.
 - Q3/Q4: Independent reading goals set.
3. Students should read AR books. Consult the AR Book Find website for thousands of choices.
www.arbookfind.com
4. Options for reading books:
 - Student reads books (50% of reading must be this type)
 - Parents read books with their child
 - Parents read books to their child
 - Student uses audio books
5. Students should read books within their suggested ZPD range (Q2-Q4) The teacher may approve books outside this range on a case-by-case basis.
6. Before choosing a book, students should make sure it appears on the AR list.
7. If students want to read a book that is not on the AR list, they may do so with teacher permission. In those cases, students may complete book reports instead of taking the computerized quiz (see book report requirements and form).

2nd Grade

1. AR is not part of the students' reading grade.
2. Goals for 2nd Grade AR
 - Q1: Review process of AR
 - Q2/Q3/Q4: Independent reading goal set.
3. Students should read AR books. Consult the AR Book Find website for thousands of choices.
www.arbookfind.com

4. Options for reading books:

- Student reads books (50% of reading must be this type)
- Parents read books with their child
- Parents read books to their child
- Student uses audio books

5. Students should read books within their suggested ZPD range. The teacher may approve books outside this range on a case-by-case basis.

6. Before choosing a book, students should make sure it appears on the AR list.

7. If students want to read a book that is not on the AR list, they may do so with teacher permission. In those cases, students may complete book reports instead of taking the computerized quiz (see book report requirements and form).

Middle Grades (3-5)

3rd Grade

1. AR is 15% of the reading grade.
2. Each student receives an individualized point goal.
3. At the beginning of the year each student fills out an AR contract and is assigned a password.
4. The classroom teacher shows students how to take AR quizzes during the first month of school.
5. Students should read books within their suggested ZPD range. The teacher may approve books outside this range on a case-by-case basis.
6. Before choosing a book, students should make sure it appears on the AR list.
7. If students want to read a book that is not on the AR list, they may do so with teacher permission. In those cases, students may complete book reports instead of taking the computerized quiz (see book report requirements and form).
8. Options for reading books:
 - Student reads books (50% of reading must be this type)
 - Parents read books *with* their child
 - Parents read books *to* their child
 - Student uses audio books

4th-5th Grade

1. AR is 15% of the reading grade.
2. At the beginning of the year each student fills out an AR contract and is assigned a password.
3. Students should read books within their suggested ZPD range. The teacher may approve books outside this range on a case-by-case basis.
4. Options for reading books:
 - Student reads books (50% of reading must be this type)
 - Parents read books *with* their child
 - Parents read books *to* their child
 - Student uses audio books
5. Students use the buddy system to teach new classmates how to take AR quizzes.

6. Once each quarter, students may complete book reports instead of taking the quiz (see “Book Report Requirements” section). The teacher determines the point value of the book report once it is turned in.
7. At least 50% of a student’s earned AR points each quarter must be from personal reading, not books read aloud by the teacher in class.

Upper Grades (6-8)

6th-8th Grade

1. AR is 10% of the literature grade.
2. At the beginning of the year each student fills out an AR contract and is assigned a password.
3. Options for reading books:
 - Student reads books
 - Student uses *pre-approved* audio books.
4. Students should read books within their suggested ZPD range. The teacher may approve books outside this range on a case-by-case basis.
5. Students use the buddy system to teach new classmates how to take AR quizzes.
6. If a student struggles with AR quizzes, he/she should talk to the teacher about ways to be more successful.
7. Students may engage in a “book interview” with the teacher if the book is not on the AR list.
 - a) The classroom teacher must approve the book prior to the student reading the book.
 - b) The teacher determines the point value of the book interview after a student finishes it.

Book Report Requirements

1st – 2nd Grade – Report forms provided by teacher. Students will complete 1 report per quarter.

3rd Grade – Report form provided by teacher

1. Name of book and author
2. Main characters
3. 5-10 sentences about what happened in the story
4. Favorite part of the story

4th – 5th Grade – No Report form provided

1. Name of book and author
2. Main characters-describe their character/role
3. Where does the story take place? Describe
4. When does the story take place?
5. What is the basic story line?
6. What you liked/disliked about this book?
7. Minimum of two pages (handwritten) or one page (typed-double spaced, 12 point font)

BOOK REPORT – 3rd Grade

Student's Name: _____

Title of book: _____

Author: _____ Number of pages: _____

The main characters in the book are _____

Write 5-10 sentences that tell what happened in the book.

What was your favorite part of the book?

