Research tells us that high scores on Accelerated Reader (AR) Reading Practice Quizzes are associated with large gains in reading achievement. That’s why we have always emphasized how important it is for pupils to maintain an average of at least 85 percent correct on AR Quizzes.

Indeed, this is how we define a pupil’s zone of proximal development or ZPD - the book-level range within which a pupil can score 85 percent or higher on AR Quizzes.

However, our research also shows that pupils who gain the most in reading ability have an even higher average. These pupils score 100 percent on many, if not most, of their AR Quizzes and average well over 90 percent.

Achieving a perfect score not only signifies that a pupil understands the key points of a book; it also motivates the pupil to read more.

“Vampires, Werewolves, and a Wimpy Kid” - What do they have in common?

The interest of our nation’s pupils! The Twilight series by Stephenie Meyer and the Diary of a Wimpy Kid books by Jeff Kinney are obviously very popular. But you might be surprised to see where other contemporary titles and the classics rank in popularity with today’s pupils.

Our latest report on What Kids Are Reading lists the top books read over the 2009 - 2010 academic year, by pupils in primary and secondary schools, overall and by reading level.

All data was compiled via our web-hosted version of Accelerated Reader - powered by Renaissance Place Real Time - creating the world’s largest database of pupil book-reading behaviour.

To request your free copy of this insightful report, visit: www.renlearn.co.uk/wkar

What This Means for You and your Pupils

When a pupil begins using AR, we recommend that you identify the pupil’s ZPD in the same way you always have - by finding the reading-level range within which the pupil can maintain an average of at least 85 percent correct on quizzes. Once ZPDs are identified, however, we suggest that you encourage all your pupils to aim for 100 percent correct on quizzes.

Thus, the process would be:

- **Test** pupils with STAR Reading
- **Identify** each pupil’s initial ZPD using STAR Reading’s Reading Range Report or the Target-Setting Chart
- **Monitor** Reading Practice Quizzes. Adjust the length or level of the books the pupil is reading until you see that the pupil is able to maintain an average of at least 85 percent correct
- **Encourage** the pupil to aim for 100 percent on quizzes. Pupils who score 100 percent have developed good reading and test-taking strategies. On the following pages we provide guidelines for how often pupils need to score 100 percent in order to experience maximum reading growth. We also suggest strategies for helping pupils achieve these high scores.
Guidelines for 100 Percent Scores

We looked at the performance of pupils in classrooms that were certified as Model and Master Classrooms. Based on that research, we created Table 1 below, which provides guidelines for how often pupils need to score 100 percent in order to maximise their reading growth.

For example, in Year 5, we recommend that pupils score 100 percent on their AR Quizzes at least 50 percent of the time. You’ll see that the guideline varies by year, with the frequency of scoring 100 percent declining as the year goes up. That’s because as pupils advance through the years, the books they read tend to be longer and more complicated; thus AR Quizzes become longer and perfect scores are harder to obtain.

Nearly half the pupils in our database met these guidelines. Those who did had significantly larger gains on STAR Reading than those who did not. Graph 1 summarise these findings.

![Graph 1](https://example.com/graph1.png)

**Source:** Reading Practice Database. Differences in reading growth gains were statistically significant between the group of pupils that met the guidelines and those who did not.

For more information on the different levels of Renaissance Learning Accreditation, and to apply visit: www.renlearn.co.uk/accreditation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 7 - 9</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 10 - 13</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1

Guidelines for how often pupils need to score 100 percent in order to maximise their reading growth

For more information on the different levels of Renaissance Learning Accreditation, and to apply visit: www.renlearn.co.uk/accreditation

Strategies for Helping Pupils Score 100 Percent

1. **Guide pupils to appropriate books**
   Pupils will not see gains in their reading ability if they always choose extremely easy books in order to get perfect quiz scores. Help pupils select books that interest them and are neither too hard nor too easy - that is, within their ZPD. Use STAR Reading scores and the Target Setting Chart to find initial ZPDs and then use your judgment to adjust them based on pupils’ quiz scores. In some cases, pupils should be allowed to read books outside their ZPD range, especially if the pupil is highly motivated or interested in reading a particular book. Counsel pupils to aim for an average of at least 85 percent and then help them learn strategies for increasing their scores to 100 percent.

2. **Use the daily conferencing technique, Status of the Class**
   Meet briefly with every pupil every day to review reading progress and recent quiz scores, check comprehension, and if a pupil is ready, help select a new book.

3. **Explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies**
   Research repeatedly confirms that the strategies on the following page improve reading comprehension. Teach them to pupils directly and model them. Then have pupils practise the strategies, with feedback from you, until they can use them independently.

4. **Teach test-taking strategies**
   Although Reading Practice Quizzes are not high stakes tests, encourage pupils to pay close attention to them. Make sure they employ good test taking strategies, such as reading all the answer choices before selecting one, which will not only help them score well, but will give them practice for other types of tests.
Proven Comprehension Strategies

Monitor Comprehension
Show pupils how to monitor their comprehension so they are aware of what they do and do not understand. Teach them techniques to use with difficult text, such as identifying the troublesome passages, re-reading and re-phrasing; searching for clues to understanding; and using prior knowledge.

Ask Questions of pupils before, during and after reading
Questions may focus on a book’s main ideas, or you might ask pupils to make predictions, draw conclusions, identify cause and effect, or differentiate between fact and opinion. Ask pupils to pose their own questions to sharpen their awareness of what they do and do not understand.

Use Graphic Organisers
Encourage pupils to visualise a book’s storyline or key ideas. Teach pupils how to use graphic organisers to see the relationship between concepts.

Story Maps
Ask pupils to identify, perhaps with a story map, a book’s setting, main events, outcomes and other elements to help them understand and remember it.

Summarise
Have pupils summarise a passage, chapter or the entire book as a way to help them pick out important ideas.

About Renaissance Learning
Renaissance Learning is the world’s leading provider of computer-based assessment technology for primary and secondary schools. Adopted by more than 75,000 schools worldwide, Renaissance Learning’s tools provide daily formative assessment and periodic progress-monitoring technology to enhance the curriculum, support differentiated instruction and personalise practice in reading, writing and maths.

Renaissance Learning products help educators make the practice component of their existing curriculum more effective by providing tools to personalise practice and easily manage the daily activities for pupils of all levels. As a result, teachers using Renaissance Learning products accelerate learning, get more satisfaction from teaching, and achieve higher test scores on national tests.

For more information

call: +44 (0)20 7184 4000
visit: www.renlearn.co.uk
email: info@renlearn.co.uk