

The Power of 100%



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How Accelerated Reader quiz scores relate to reading achievement

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 emphasised how important it is for pupils to maintain an average of at least 85% 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% or higher on AR quizzes, without being frustrated.

However, our research also shows that pupils who gain the most in reading ability have an even higher average. These pupils score 100% 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.



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% correct on quizzes. Once ZPDs are identified, however, we suggest that you encourage all your students to aim for 100% correct on quizzes.

The process would be:

- Test pupils with STAR Reading or another test of reading ability.
- 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 he or she is able to maintain an average of at least 85% correct.
- Encourage the pupil to aim for 100% on quizzes.

Pupils who score 100% have developed good reading and exam technique. On the following pages we provide guidelines for how often pupils need to score 100% in order to experience maximum reading growth. We also suggest strategies for helping pupils achieve these high scores.



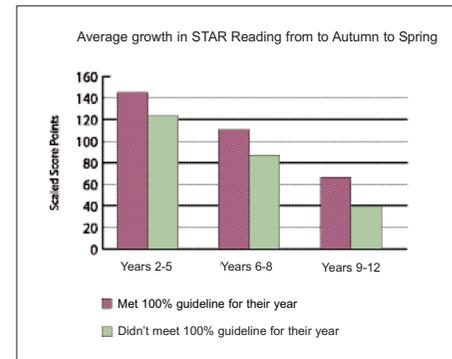
Guidelines for 100% Scores

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

Year 1	70%
Year 2	60%
Year 3	55%
Year 4	50%
Year 5	50%
Years 6-8	40%
Years 9-12	30%

For example, in Year 4, we recommend that pupils score 100% on their AR quizzes at least 50% of the time. You'll see that the guideline varies by year level, with the frequency of scoring 100 percent declining as the year level 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. The graph below summarises these findings.



Source: Reading Practice Database. Differences in reading growth gains were statistically significant between the group of pupils that met the guidelines and the group that did not. There were not a sufficient number of records from Year 1 to include in the analysis.

Strategies for helping pupils score 100%

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 students' 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. Guide pupils to aim for an average of at least 85% and then help them learn strategies for increasing their scores to 100%.



2. Monitor reading progress with Status of the Class. Meet briefly with each pupil 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 practice the strategies, with feedback from you, until they can use them independently.

4. Teach exam technique strategies. Although Reading Practice Quizzes are not national tests, they do encourage pupils to pay close attention to exam technique, 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 that they are aware of what they do and do not understand. Teach them techniques to use with difficult text, such as identifying difficult passages, re-reading, and rephrasing; 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.



For more information on these and other strategies, consult textbooks on reading comprehension as well as Renaissance Learning's Professional Development Department on freephone 0800 917 4447.