

Reading Guidance

In September, students did an online reading assessment (STAR) to determine their English reading level.

What is STAR?

It is a computer-based reading assessment program; the questions continually adjust to each child's responses. If the response is correct, the difficulty level is increased. If they cannot answer a question, or answer incorrectly, the difficulty level is reduced. The test uses multiple-choice questions.

What does STAR tell us?

This assessment gives us a reading age for each child which then indicates what level of text they can comfortably read and what is too challenging. At school, we are aware that some materials are challenging for some and by using the reading data on each child, we can ensure we make texts more accessible by using whole-class strategies to investigating the meaning within the text.

How can Tutors, English teachers and Parents use this reading age?

We can use this data to guide students to reading books that will be at the right level to both ensure understanding but also to create progress for them; they need a balance between comprehension and challenge to progress. For example a child with a reading age of 12 will not be challenged and progress by reading a book for a 10 year old, even if they enjoy that book. Our role as teachers and parents is to provide alternatives books with the right level of challenge. This information is given to us in the form of a ZPD.

What is a ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development)?

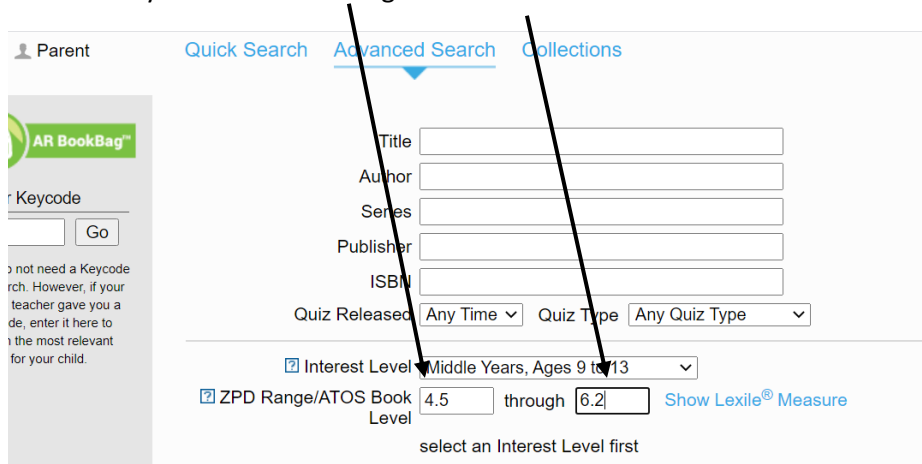
A ZPD indicates the range of books that will challenge a child without causing frustration or loss of motivation. Each child will receive a ZPD, or reading range, after taking a Star Reading test. It is important for children to read with a high degree of comprehension and within their ZPD.

How can I use this ZPD range to choose my child a suitable book?

www.ARBookFind.co.uk

This free website will guide you to appropriately challenging books.

1. Enter you are a parent
2. On the next page click 'advanced search'
3. Ignore the first boxes – look for 'interest level' and select age group
4. Fill in your child's ZPD range in like this:



The screenshot shows the AR BookFind website search interface. The 'Advanced Search' tab is selected. The 'Interest Level' dropdown is set to 'Middle Years, Ages 9 to 13'. The 'ZPD Range/ATOS Book Level' is set to '4.5 through 6.2'. A 'Show Lexile® Measure' link is visible next to the ZPD range. The 'Interest Level' dropdown is highlighted with a red arrow, and the 'ZPD Range/ATOS Book Level' is highlighted with a red arrow.

5. Press Search at the bottom of the page without filling anything else in.
6. A list of appropriate books will appear. You can then pick one with your child that appeals to them or if you need Mr Hopper can source from the Library for you shopper@middlewichhigh.cheshire.sch.uk

7. If your child has a large ZPD range (e.g. 4.5-8.1), we recommend shortening it to create a more manageable list of books and ones that will be most suitable. For example, we have found the beginning of the range will be the easiest books and may be too simple for a confident/older reader so when you enter the ZPD range put in 6.1-8.1 and cut out the easier part of the range.

How often should my child read?

Daily. Your child should read without distractions for 30 minutes daily. Research has shown that reading helps cognitive development; a recent IoE study revealed that students who read at home do 'significantly better' across the curriculum – including 9.9% better in maths – than students who don't read.

Okay ... so you have a reluctant reader. How can you encourage them?

- Find books with a connection to something they love. If they like military/action, then try the *Dog Tag* series by CA London or Andy McNab's teen books. If they like to watch YouTubers, try Zoella's book club. And if they are into gaming, teen author Alex Scarrow was a professional video-game developer before becoming a writer or Jeff Norton's *MetaWars* series, called 'A video game you can read'.
- Ask for a 'Suggested Reads' list: we have lists of books linked to the English curriculum, which will help your child feel more informed in class and earn them a lesson grade 4 for extra-curricular reading.
- Try graphic novels, e.g. versions of *The Recruit* by Robert Muchamore, *Silverfin* by Charlie Higson and *Stormbreaker* by Anthony Horowitz. The 'Classical Comics' series energises Dickens and Shakespeare!
- Try Barrington Stoke books: these are produced with dyslexia friendly paper and fonts – they suit students with Irlens too. <https://www.barringtonstoke.co.uk/>
- If your child is ready, you might select a 'grittier' book, but tell them maybe they should wait six months as 'there is some language and some blood'. Soon they will be begging you for the book, and you can eventually give in. Ask Mrs Atkin Nash for recommendations in this genre.
- Visit the library with your child; both take your time selecting a book to read yourself.
- Try a 'phone free' hour with a YouTube-addicted child: every day they have to hand in their phone for an hour. Eventually (out of boredom) they will start to read – with a little encouragement.
- Be enthusiastic about what they are reading: ask them to describe a character or to read you an exciting bit. You might even read a teen/YA book yourself and compete with your child to finish the same book first – who will win the tussle over the book when you're both nearing the end?
- Be a good role model: let your children see you reading for pleasure, and talk about what you read and how you choose. Suggest a favourite childhood books or ask a family member to recommend a read. Also, continue to read aloud to your children (even if they are fluent readers).
- Ask an older child who is a reluctant reader to read to a younger sibling – a huge confidence booster which encourages sibling bonding. Michael Morpurgo is a good shared read – try *Kensuke's Kingdom*.
- Children can also read to pets: ask them to read to the dog for 10 minutes every day. Dogs love it!
- Offer incentives, perhaps using things you had already planned to buy or do as a reward. This can work when a 'breakthrough' is necessary. Or even use a new book as a reward.
- Find the book version of a film or that inspired a television series. Both of you can read the book and watch together – and then discuss the differences. Or challenge them to read a book before they see the film – e.g. *The Knife of Never Letting Go* is due out as a film (*Chaos Walking*) in March.
- Get them to switch to an e-reader! Cheshire libraries loan e-books free of charge. Kindle offer daily deals.
- Short attention span? Try short stories: *Horowitz Horror*, *Tales of the Unexpected*, *Smoke and Mirrors*.
- Try audio books. Cheshire libraries have a wide range of free, downloadable audio books and Audible offers a selection of teen books. Many teens like the idea of being able to do something active while listening to a book and research suggests this is an excellent way to progress.
- Visit a bookstore and allow your child to select a book of their choice. The visually appealing marketing and layout of best-selling books can attract even the most reluctant readers.
- Try non-fiction, such as biographies/autobiographies, that might interest your child. Recent student favourites have been *Maddie Diaries* by Ziegler and *The Greatest* (Muhammed Ali) by Walter Dean Myers.