

### A Guide to

# Reading Enjoyment

A resource for teachers



#### **Foreword**

Promoting book reading and encouraging children and young people to read for pleasure is crucial. While the benefits of books for developing reading and language skills are well documented, books offer so much more. Books introduce us to new concepts and ideas, they immerse us in fictional worlds and can evoke a whole range of emotions. Books develop and challenge our thinking, they nurture our imagination, offer us new fictional friends and can develop empathy. Each book offers children and young people a new and unique experience, therefore finding ways to promote and encourage book reading among children and young people is essential.

Yet many teachers often find they struggle to develop a love of book reading among children and young people. Some children and young people have never developed the habit, others have but sadly lost it. While some report that they simply don't enjoy reading books, this often stems from poor perceptions of themselves as readers or the absence of positive experiences with books.

We need to work collectively to find ways to promote and encourage book reading among all children and young people. This resource for teachers aims to highlight why book reading is so important and describes features of Accelerated Reader and myON which can support teachers in this endeayour.

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#### Introduction

At Renaissance Learning, our aim is to support primary and secondary school students' reading enjoyment and development by encouraging independent reading activity aligning with students' interests and skill. Both Accelerated Reader (AR) and myON focus on developing students' reading enjoyment, attitudes and practice (REAP) with the expectation that they will REAP the rewards of sustained book reading over time.

Recent research from the National Literacy Trust's survey of children and young people's reading habits1 compared those who reported having used AR (n = 18,149) with those who had not (n = 26,740), matching for demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, socioeconomic background). In total, 56.2% of pupils who used AR, compared to 51% of pupils who didn't, reported enjoying reading. Also, 29.2% of pupils who used AR compared to 24.1% who didn't, reported daily reading in their own time. Furthermore, greater reading enjoyment and daily reading among AR users were found consistently across Key Stage 2, 3 and 4. In addition, AR usage appeared to narrow the gender gap in reading enjoyment, with a 9.9% gap (AR) compared to 16.4% (non-AR) gap between boys and girls.

Our aim with AR and myON is to encourage students to read a wide range of books, aligned to their reading interests and ability, to provide rich reading experiences and opportunities to develop both reading and language skills. Both AR and myON are tools for teachers, parents and students to track independent reading activity and celebrate reading success.

# Pupils who said they enjoy reading Pupils using AR Pupils not using AR Pupils that read daily Pupils using AR Pupils not using AR Pupils not using AR Pupils not using AR Pupils using AR

1 (National Literacy Trust, 2019)



#### Why encourage book reading?

Encouraging book reading is crucial as research has highlighted numerous benefits of reading books. For example, students who read more books have better general knowledge, language skills, reading and spelling skills and school achievement2. Indeed, when books are compared with other text types, such as comics, magazines and digital texts, books are more closely associated with positive reading outcomes3.

Furthermore, books offer children and young people diverse experiences. Interviews with children and young people suggest that they read books to relax, to be entertained, for thrills, to pursue their interests, to learn new things, to immerse themselves in imaginary worlds, and/or to spend time with fictional friends4. Yet despite the opportunities for these positive experiences, we often struggle to find ways to encourage children and young people to read.

Book reading among children and adolescents has declined over the last few years, as illustrated by the National Literacy Trust's annual survey of children's and young people's reading5. For example, in 2019, based on data from 59,906 children and young people age 9-18, only 25.8% of children and young people surveyed reported daily reading outside of class, despite 53% reporting to enjoy reading.

5 (Clark & Teravainen-Goff, 2020)

Only 25.8% of children and young people surveyed reported daily reading outside of class, despite 53% reporting to enjoy reading.

#### Students who read more books have:

- Better general knowledge
- Better language skills
- Better reading and spelling skills
- Better school achievement





Perhaps surprisingly, research has reported that fiction book reading, rather than non-fiction reading, is associated with better language<sup>6</sup> and reading<sup>7</sup> outcomes. Furthermore, in research with adults, fiction specifically has been associated with better social skills and increased empathy<sup>8</sup>.

However, there are obvious benefits to nonfiction book reading. Non-fiction develops students' knowledge and understanding of the world, it introduces them to different topics and subject specific vocabulary they would not encounter in fiction books. It can also satisfy children's and young people's genuine desire to learn more about different issues and explore their interests further.

In addition, students often have preferences for different book types and genres. For example, it's well documented that boys, on average, read more non-fiction than girls (although not exclusively)<sup>9</sup>, therefore ensuring children and young people have access to both fiction and non-fiction is essential to suit differing interests.

#### Supporting fiction and non-fiction reading with myON and AR

myON offers over 5,000 fiction and non-fiction digital books which students can access 24/7 and offline (by downloading up to 20 books via the digital app). Thousands of myON News articles cover a range of topics and interests with 5 new articles added every week day.

To date, we have quizzed over 37,000 titles for Accelerated Reader, around one third of which are non-fiction and articles covering a range of topics. 'Non-fiction November' is a good opportunity to raise awareness, and engagement, in non-fiction reading.

The quizzes students complete independently after each book are intended to assess their knowledge and understanding, but also promote deeper reading engagement in fiction and non-fiction texts. Our Content Team keep up to date with new book releases and respond to requests from schools to quiz specific books. Over 1,200 quizzes have also been recorded with voice over, making these more accessible for students who are in the earlier stages of learning to read.





Non-fiction article in AR



myON News article



Fiction quiz result

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> (Mar & Rain, 2015). <sup>7</sup> (Duncan et al., 2016; Torrpa et al., 2019). <sup>8</sup> (Mar, Oatley, Hirsh, dela Paz & Peterson, 2006; Mar, Oatley & Peterson, 2009).

<sup>9 (</sup>Clark, 2016).

#### Promoting book reading enjoyment and engagement

## "It is important for students to have control over their own reading activities."

There is a growing body of research which suggests key principles to foster greater enjoyment and engagement in book reading at school. Both AR and myON can be used as tools to support and mirror the excellent classroom practices which are already taking place in schools. Principles to support reading enjoyment and engagement are summarised below, followed by a discussion of how the features of AR and myON can support reading enjoyment and engagement.

#### Choice

Research suggests that it is important for students to have control over their own reading activities, by selecting books aligned to their developing reading interests; this promotes reading motivation, engagement, effort and commitment<sup>10</sup>. Furthermore, students who learn to make their own reading choices become more confident doing this independently when they are older. Easy access to a large number of books is important to allow student choice, however guidance to support decision-making can also be very helpful.

#### Supporting book choice with myON and AR

myON offers over 5,000 enhanced digital books, providing students with a variety of choice while supporting them with discovering books that match their interests. Students are prompted to create an interest inventory, allowing them to rate their interest on a range of topics from 1-5. myON then recommends titles that align with the individual's ability and interests, a skill which some students struggle with. Students can also search for titles by genre, reading level and story length.

AR recommends future titles based on the genres, authors or topics of previously quizzed titles. AR BookFinder is a fun and easy online search engine for over 37,000 AR quizzed titles. It also offers advanced search options by interest or topic.



The myON library is divided into ten book categories







AR bookshelf

<sup>10 (</sup>Guthrie et al., 2007; McGeown, 2013)



#### Success

Experiencing success is also crucial to motivate children and young people to read more<sup>11</sup> therefore the texts students read should align with their reading skills to ensure enjoyable and rewarding reading experiences. Students able to accurately evaluate their own reading skills are better able to select texts appropriately; however, some students do need support with this. It's also important that the short- and longterm reading goals that children and young people have are realistic and that students receive positive feedback on their progress. Praising effort and growth in reading interests/skills rather than focusing on ability is also crucial.



Certificates and other award schemes, such as AR Word Millionaire Club, can increase students' confidence and motivation

#### Success with myON and AR

With AR, students are encouraged to read within their zone of proximal development (the optimal zone to develop their reading skills), to ensure they are sufficiently challenged, while also experiencing continued reading success. Within myON, teachers can also suggest books that are at the appropriate reading level and align with students' interests. Students' reading targets in AR are always personalised to ensure they experience success and teachers/peers can celebrate achievements, by providing positive feedback that focuses on reading growth and development. In addition, students also have their own digital library, to keep track of the books they have read, which will also suggest books to them based on their ZPD and previous reading choices. This digital library allows students to keep a track of their own reading and chart their own progress and success.



myON monthly reading target



myON daily reading target



#### Collaboration

While reading is often seen to be a solitary activity, arranging opportunities for students to discuss books is also important for reading enjoyment, motivation and engagement<sup>12</sup>. These discussions may be in person, or online, but providing students with opportunities to share their thoughts and opinions on books is a good habit to develop.



#### How myON and AR support collaboration

Within myON, students can leave online reviews to share their thoughts on books they have read. With both AR and myON, the books students read can serve as prompts for other group activities such as creating storyboards, mindmaps, or simply group discussions.

There are also lots of additional AR resources available for schools. These can help to embed reading for pleasure into the school day and provide opportunities for social activities. Resources that have proven to be popular include posters, bookmarks and literacy games such as ScrARbble, Quizopoly and BookbustAR. Furthermore, approaches which promote a reading culture across the school (e.g., quizzes, the lost page, teachers as 'reading role models') can create opportunities to collaborate and share reading experiences.

Discussions about AR quizzed books can be prompted by leaving reviews on signed post-it notes inside books or creating top book displays for different genres or even selecting in-house experts (students or teachers). These experts could be awarded 'genre badges' so that others can go to them for recommendations.

Finally, reading can be celebrated within and across classes via specific literacy activities and events such as World Book Day, Book Week, Roald Dahl Day, National Poetry Night, Harry Potter Night and Black History Month.







Go to takethequiz.co.uk for fun literary resources such as BookbustAR, ScrARbble and Quizopoly

<sup>12 (</sup>Guthrie et al., 2007)



#### Understand students' motivation to read

Students read for a variety of reasons and their motivations for reading influence their reading choices<sup>13</sup>. There's a considerable body of research highlighting the different reasons why children read, and this research often differentiates between intrinsic reading motivation (i.e., being internally driven to read) and extrinsic reading motivation (i.e., being externally driven to read - reading to achieve a separable outcome)14. A genuine interest to read more about a topic, a desire to become immersed in a story or simply choosing to read to relax are all forms of intrinsic reading motivation. On the other hand, reading for a reward, to receive praise or to outperform others are all forms of extrinsic reading motivation.

In studies comparing intrinsic and extrinsic reading motivation, intrinsic motivation is consistently found to be more closely associated with positive reading outcomes, for example more time spent reading and better reading skill, while extrinsic reading motivation is often unrelated, or sometimes inversely related to these outcomes<sup>15</sup>. While extrinsic motivators (e.g., praise, rewards) are used frequently to encourage children and young people to read, connecting them with a book that provides them with positive experiences (e.g., enjoyment, excitement, relaxation) is more likely to encourage intrinsic reading motivation in future.

#### How myON and AR motivates students

Both Accelerated Reader and myON can help to develop intrinsic reading motivation by connecting children and young people with books aligned with their reading interests and ability level. Connecting children and young people with the 'right' books, that is, those that are likely to foster intrinsic reading motivation is key to developing independent readers. While specific functions of AR and myON promote extrinsic reading motivation (e.g., by rewarding number of words read) this should not be at the expense of depth of reading engagement, which is required for the quizzes afterwards. To support non-fiction reading, teachers can capitalize on students' own interests and create projects (i.e., topic-based curriculum) where specific activities aligning with students' interests can be suggested within their profiles to encourage greater depth of engagement. This can also encourage students to read beyond the book, for example, with links to websites, videos, etc.



<sup>13 (</sup>McGeown, Osborne, Warhurst, Norgate & Duncan, 2015)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> (Schiefele, Schaffner, Moller, Wigfield, 2012; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> (Becker, McElvany & Kortenbruck, 2010; Guthrie et al., 1999; Retelsdorf, Köller, & Möller, 2011; Schiefele, Stutz & Schaffner, 2016; Schiefele et al., 2012; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997)



#### AR and myON: Practical supports for teachers and students

AR and myON contain a number of different functions, and offer additional resources, to support teachers as they develop students' reading enjoyment, engagement and skill. Some of these supports are described below:

Firstly AR can be an excellent tool to support and develop teachers' knowledge of literature for children and young people. Teachers can use AR as a resource to build their knowledge and also support conversations and recommendations to students. For example, AR Bookfinder is an online book-searching tool which makes book selection easy for teachers, but also students, parents and librarians. BookFinder provides different search approaches and offers a short synopsis of AR quizzed books.

AR also makes it easier for teachers to learn about students' reading abilities and interests, as this information is automatically stored for each student. With lots of children to support in school, having quick and easy access to this information can be incredibly helpful.

There are also several features of myON which can support both teachers and students. For example, students can use myON's tools to support their learning (e.g., highlighter, sticky notes, reading journal where note taking is encouraged and saved within the book online). Furthermore, a dynamic online dictionary ensures students can develop a deeper understanding of content and vocabulary. Teachers also report that the audio feature of myON supports some students, in particular bilingual or multilingual learners and those with word reading difficulties, but a desire to engage with books for their age range. Finally, due to the reporting within myON, teachers can see what children have read at home.

It is easy for teachers to provide parents/guardians with information about what students are reading. Through Renaissance Home Connect, parents can use this to continue conversations about books at home and support their child's reading.

AR can also support with the transition from primary to secondary, providing a familiar programme for children. Although used primarily in this context, AR can be used beyond students in Years 7 and 8 as many of the GCSE texts are quizzed, or on myON, thus supporting older readers. Furthermore, using features of AR to support literacy across the curriculum can be helpful in a secondary school context.

The annual What Kids Are Reading report provides details of the most popular and most read books by children and young people. This report draws upon the extensive data we have about how much children and adolescents have been reading and what they've been reading (i.e., diversity of book choices and most popular books). It provides information about popularity of books based on year group, books read most often by high achieving and struggling readers and most read non-fiction. It also shares favourite books across year groups, as rated by children and young people. In this report you can also read about school successes and hear from authors about what reading means to them.



Accelerated Reader Bookfinder



Renaissance Home Connect



The annual What Kids Are Reading report

In addition, the <u>ATOS analyser</u> can be used by teachers and applied to any text to determine its difficulty. ATOS uses four factors to determine text difficulty: average sentence length, average word length, word difficulty level and the total number of words in the book. Freely available to use, the online ATOS Analyser can be used by teachers to indicate the reading level of non-AR texts used within their classroom.

Our book quizzes can be used to support whole class reading discussions about a specific book, where students are all reading the same text. Indeed, group and class discussions about books are incredibly important and the AR quizzes can be used as a resource in this context. With over 37,000 guizzes (13,000 suitably levelled books for young/inexperienced readers), teachers have prepared resources (no planning required) to enable high-quality discussions to take place in the classroom. AR quizzes and the discussions that emerge from them offer opportunities for teachers to develop students' language, teach and explain new vocabulary and provide students with opportunities to share their opinions and perspectives of the book. There are a number of different quiz options that teachers can use to enable this type of discussion.

Reading practice quizzes (for short books: 3/5 questions and for longer books: 10/20 questions) provide a backdrop to further discussion, exploration of the text and comprehension development. For teachers these quizzes offer ready-made opportunities to have in-depth discussions about the book. In addition, teachers can use these quizzes to develop prediction and inference skills among children and young people.

There are also over 1200 <u>vocabulary</u> <u>practice</u> (VP) quizzes which align with National Curriculum expectations. Students are typically offered the opportunity to sit the VP Quiz once they have completed a Reading Practice Quiz. However, these can also be used as part of a whole class guided reading approach to promote in-depth learning of language, vocabulary, synonyms, etc.

Furthermore, there are approximately 130 <u>literacy skills quizzes</u> which have been written with 24 specific reading and critical-thinking skills providing diagnostic information within the context of reading real literature. Created for selected books, Accelerated Reader Literacy Skills Quizzes develop skills in four key areas: initial understanding, inferential comprehension, literary analysis, and constructing meaning.

Finally, within AR, there's an option for teachers to make their own quizzes, but why not get students involved too? Students can work with each other and their teacher to write quizzes for their peers or younger/developing readers. Creating questions and alternative answers is an excellent way for students to consider dominant themes/ideas in the book and is a good way to start conversations about books.



ATOS Text-Analyser



Reading practice quiz



Write your own quiz









#### **Glossary of Renaissance Software**



Accelerated Reader (AR) is a powerful tool for monitoring and managing independent reading practice, motivating your students to read for pleasure.



Accelerate Reader quizzes assess student knowledge and understanding of fiction and non-fiction texts while promoting deeper reading engagement.



AR Bookfinder is an online booksearching tool which makes book selection easy for teachers, students, parents and librarians by providing different search approaches and providing short descriptions of books with AR quizzes.



**AR Bookshelf** within displays all books read and quizzed on by the student for Accelerated Reader.



AR Diagnostic Report makes it easier for teachers to learn about students' reading abilities as AR quiz results are automatically stored for each student. Having quick and easy access to this information can be incredibly helpful.



Literacy skills quizzes (LS) help teachers assess their students' development and proficiency on 24 specific reading and critical-thinking skills that are found in national standards and on many national tests. Administered on selected books, Literacy Skills Quizzes allow you to monitor your students' growth in each skill throughout the year.



**myON** by Renaissance provides every student with 24/7 access to thousands of enhanced digital texts and literacy supports.



myON audio feature supports all students but in particular bilingual or multilingual learners, or those with word reading difficulties.



myON built-in tools can support students with their learning. e.g., highlighter, sticky notes, reading journal where note-taking is encouraged and saved within the book online.



**myON News** powered by News-o-Matic, delivers age-appropriate digital news articles for students, reporting on timely topics and current events.



myON online dictionary is a dynamic dictionary that ensures students can develop a deeper understanding of content and vocabulary.



myON reports allows teachers to see what children have read and tracks daily usage in and out of school.



Reading practice quizzes (RP) are the foundation of the Accelerated Reader program, helping teachers monitor large amounts of student reading practice. They help teachers measure students' comprehension of books read. They are motivational because they ensure a successful, positive experience if the student has read a book at the proper level. It is recommended that students take the quiz within 24 hours of finishing a book so that the quiz tests comprehension and not memory.



provide parents/guardians with information about what their child is reading. Parents can use this tool to continue conversations about books at home and support their child's reading.

Star Assessments are used for screening, progress monitoring and diagnostic progress monitoring and

Renaissance Home Connect can



Star Assessments are used for screening, progress monitoring and diagnostic assessment in reading, maths and early literacy. They are computer-adaptive, efficiently determining pupils' attainment level in much less time than classic paper-based tests. The assessments have been proven as valid and reliable, correlating strongly with other tests including the KS2 SATs.



Teacher-made quizzes are Reading Practice Quizzes that teachers, librarians, school staff or school administrators have created and added to the programme.



The ATOS Analyser can be used by teachers and applied to any text to determine its difficulty. ATOS uses four factors to determine text difficulty: average sentence length, average word length, word difficulty level and the total number of words in the book.



Vocabulary practice quizzes (VP) help teachers maximise students' word acquisition through reading practice. Vocabulary Practice Quizzes contain 5, 10 or 15 questions covering the vocabulary words found in the books they have read.



What Kids Are Reading Report provides details of the most popular and most read books by children and young people drawing on the most extensive data that we have. It provides information about popularity of books based on year group, books read most often by high achieving and struggling readers and most read non-fiction. There are also stories about schools' successes as well as authors reflecting on what reading means to them.

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