

Reading and its importance



The link between reading and success is not always immediately clear to young people. However, the National Literacy Trust suggests that 92% of the British public believe that literacy is essential for getting a good job and indeed, vital for the economy. This, coupled with a recent Oxford University study linking reading for pleasure to improved chances of attending university and gaining higher paid careers, emphasises the need for our students to engage in a positive reading ethos. With this in mind, from September 2013 we have introduced the Accelerated Reader programme for our Year 7s and Year 8s. This aims to improve reading ages by as much as twenty-four months in one school year.

What is Accelerated Reader (AR)?

Accelerated Reader is a computer application that helps to manage and monitor students' independent reading practice. Students take an initial baseline reading test and are then re-tested a further three times during the year in order for English teachers to monitor their progress. The first test allocates students a reading range (called the 'ZPD') giving a personalised array of books they can read which offer challenge whilst minimising frustration or loss of motivation. Students will also be given a points target to work towards in order to offer further incentive. Books in the library will be labelled with this ZPD information along with a colour-code to help students choose books based on their reading range.



Once a student has chosen a book and read it, they will take a short quiz on one of the library's computers which they can access during their library lessons or at break or lunch time. As long as the student scores 85% or more on the quiz, they will 'win' the points the book has been allocated. You may be wondering why students 'win' points? Well, in order to encourage them to read and to track their progress, students will have a target to work towards based on their reading age and how much they read each day. The idea of quizzing and collecting points allows teachers to monitor who is reading, who is taking quizzes based on the books they have read and who is making progress. English teachers will be able to monitor student progress in reading and to give advice if students are not enjoying particular books. Students achieving their target will have the opportunity to win certificates and awards.

What does our college do to help students become better readers?

Felpham has allocated 10 minutes during the school day for reading. Students also have their library lessons once a fortnight, as well as tutor time, where they can read and discuss books with their teachers.



What can I do to help my child to become a better reader?



We ask that you encourage your child to read for at least 20 minutes at home each day in order to gain as much reading practice as possible. Also, discussing books with them, hearing them read, and asking questions about what they have read will also help to encourage reading (as well as visiting bookshops and the local library with them).

Choosing books with your child

Not all of the books in our library are part of the Accelerated Reader programme. This does not mean that students are banned from reading these books! Any reading practice allows children the opportunity to progress. Students will be asked to keep a log of **all** the books they have read so they can discuss these books with teachers and with you. The company behind Accelerated Reader is adding more and more books to its list and you can locate books which are part of the programme through www.arbookfind.co.uk.



Students not on the Accelerated Reader programme can select suitable books with the help of Mr Thraves, our school librarian.

Questions to ask whilst reading could include:

Recall questions:

- What happened in the story?
- When does the story take place?
- What are the characters' names?
- Where would you find specific information in the book?

Making sense of the text:

- Why did the character do that?
- How do you think the character is feeling at this particular point in the story?
- How might what has just happened affect the storyline?
- What do you think that word/phrase means?
- What do you think the story/text is trying to tell us? Is there a message?
- Which words/phrases/facts do you like best and why?
- How does the layout help the reader?
- What is the purpose of the pictures?
- Explain what you think the physical description of the characters tells us about him/her. Also, what do their actions reveal about them?
- What do these words mean and why do you think the writer chose them?
- Why do you think the author chose this title?