

The Power of 100%



How Accelerated Reader Quiz Scores Relate to Reading Growth

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 students to maintain an average of at least 85 percent correct on AR quizzes. Indeed, this is how we define a student's zone of proximal development or ZPD—the book-level range within which a student can score 85 percent or higher on AR quizzes.

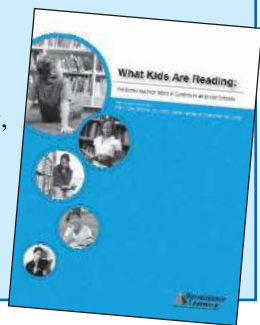
However, our research also shows that students who gain the most in reading ability have an even higher average. These students score 100 percent on many, if not most, of their AR quizzes and average well over 90 percent. Achieving a perfect score not only signifies that a student understands the key points of a book, it also motivates the student to read more.

"Move Over Harry Potter!"

The Books Kids Read Most Often Are Not What You'd Expect.

Renaissance Learning maintains the world's largest database of student book-reading behavior, captured via our Web-hosted Accelerated Reader database. When you host your AR software in our Enterprise-class data center, your students' book-reading behavior will be included with that of students in schools and districts nationwide. For 2007, our database contains AR book-reading records for more than 3 million students in more than 9,800 schools who read more than 78 million books.

A new report entitled *What Kids Are Reading* includes detailed information about the books students are reading in schools hosting their software at Renaissance Learning, including lists of the top 20 books read in 2007 by students in grades 1–12—overall, by gender, by U.S. region, and by reading level. For a free copy of this report call (800) 338-4204 or visit www.renlearn.com.



What This Means for You and Your Students

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

Thus the process would be:

- Test students with STAR Reading or another test of reading ability.
- Identify each student's initial ZPD using STAR Reading's Reading Range Report or the Goal-Setting Chart.
- Monitor Reading Practice Quizzes. Adjust the length or level of the books the student is reading until you see that the student is able to maintain an average of at least 85 percent correct.
- Encourage the student to aim for 100 percent on quizzes.

Students who score 100 percent have developed good reading and test-taking strategies. On the following pages we provide guidelines for how often students need to score 100 percent in order to experience maximum reading growth. We also suggest strategies for helping students achieve these high scores.



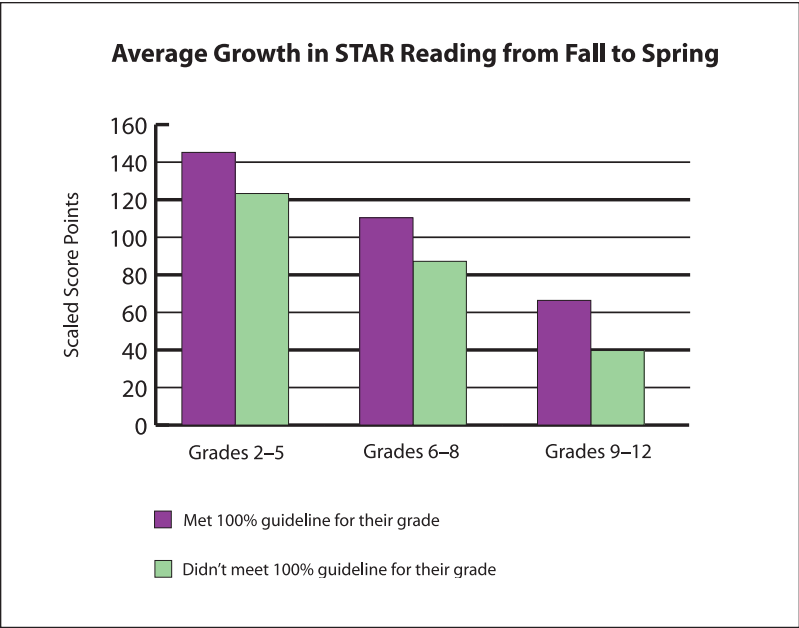
Guidelines for 100 Percent Scores

We looked at the performance of students 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 students need to score 100 percent in order to maximize their reading growth.

Grade 1	70%
Grade 2	60%
Grade 3	55%
Grade 4	50%
Grade 5	50%
Grades 6–8	40%
Grades 9–12	30%

For example, in grade 4, we recommend that students score 100 percent on their AR quizzes at least 50 percent of the time. You'll see that the guideline varies by grade level, with the frequency of scoring 100 percent declining as the grade level goes up. That's because as students advance through the grades, 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 students in our database met these guidelines. Those who did had significantly larger gains on STAR Reading than those who did not. The graph below summarizes these findings.



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

Strategies For Helping Students Score 100 Percent

1. Guide students to appropriate books. Students will not see gains in their reading ability if they always choose extremely easy books in order to get perfect quiz scores. Help students select books that interest them and are neither too hard nor too easy—that is, within their ZPD. Use STAR Reading scores and the Goal-Setting Chart to find initial ZPDs and then use your judgment to adjust them based on students' quiz scores. In some cases, students should be allowed to read books outside their ZPD range, especially if the student is highly motivated or interested in reading a particular book. Counsel students 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 student every day to review reading progress and recent quiz scores, check comprehension, and, if a student 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 students directly and model them. Then have students practice 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 students 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 students 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 the troublesome passage, rereading, and rephrasing; searching for clues to understanding; and using prior knowledge.
- **Ask Questions** of students before, during, and after reading. Questions may focus on a book's main ideas, or you might ask students to make predictions, draw conclusions, identify cause and effect, or differentiate between fact and opinion. Ask students to pose their own questions to sharpen their awareness of what they do and do not understand.
- **Use Graphic Organizers.** Encourage students to visualize a book's storyline or key ideas. Teach students how to use graphic organizers to see the relationship between concepts.
- **Story Maps.** Ask students to identify, perhaps with a story map, a book's setting, main events, outcomes, and other elements to help them understand and remember it.
- **Summarize.** Have students summarize 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 *Power Lessons* books.

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