

Reference R14173

Reading Renaissance and Using Grades

Product: Accelerated Reader
Last Updated: 7/14/2005

Issue:

Should Reading Renaissance Activities, including Accelerated Reader™, be linked to grades?

Resolution:

Schools and districts often ask if they should link Reading Renaissance activities, including Accelerated Reader (AR™), to grades. Renaissance Learning does not make any recommendation regarding this. It is our belief that grading policies are a local decision. However, we do wish to point out certain aspects of Reading Renaissance that may affect a school's or district's decision.

1. Reading Renaissance recommends that students spend a considerable amount of time each school day on reading practice: 60 minutes for independent readers in elementary grades, 45 minutes in middle school, and 30 minutes in high school. Because of this significant amount of time dedicated to reading, many schools may want to include mention of student participation in Reading Renaissance on the student's grade report.
2. Teachers may be tempted to use AR Reading Practice Quiz scores in the same way they use scores from other tests. AR Reading Practice Quizzes, however, are not achievement tests. Instead, AR Reading Practice Quizzes are designed to give feedback to the student and the teacher, as well as to motivate the student to continue reading practice.
3. If a school or district does decide to link Reading Renaissance activities to grades, we strongly urge that a system be established in which all students can earn "A" grades if they make reasonable efforts to reach their goals. The standard bell curve does not apply in this case. Also, point goals should be individualized. We recommend that a grading system take into account achievement of individual goals for points, average percent correct, additional goals, and Reader Certification. We also suggest that, in this case, teachers use AR only as a portion of the overall grade.

It is important that students have adequate resources in terms of time, books, quizzes, and computers, to help them reach their goals. The grading system must encourage every student to practice reading, and it is vital for students and parents to understand the grading system at the beginning of the school year. Above all, students must remain motivated, enthusiastic readers.