

## Goal-Setting Best Practices (for Grades 3 and Up)

### Understanding ZPD and Goals

The software uses a student's first Renaissance Star Reading® score of the year to estimate a zone of proximal development (ZPD) and to recommend appropriate reading practice goals. These are based on research data and are individualized for each student. *If you do not have Star Reading, use the Goal Calculator in the software or the Goal-Setting Chart in Resources.*

#### ZPD

The ZPD is the optimal level of difficulty for reading practice. The software estimates a ZPD based on a student's Star Reading score. Allow students to read throughout the entire zone. "Stair-stepping" students through their ZPD (three texts at 2.0, three texts at 2.1, and so on) is not supported by research and can turn students off to reading.

#### Average-Percent-Correct Goal

The most important goal for all students is to average at least 85 percent on quizzes. This indicates a student is reading with a high level of comprehension, which accelerates reading growth. Averages of 90 percent are associated with even greater gains.

#### Point Goal

Point goals indicate how much reading students are expected to do. The software provides point goals that are appropriate for each student's reading ability, the amount of time that you schedule for daily reading practice, and the length of the marking period. In this way, point goals are individualized, fair, and realistic. We do not recommend giving all students the same point goal. If a student is frequently absent or if you are not able to schedule reading practice for part of the marking period, lower your students' point goals.

#### Reading Range or Book-Level Goal

Use Reading Range goals (recommended) to help students read at a target range of book levels. Students see those ranges in their book ideas in Accelerated Reader to help guide their book selection; they also see their reading ranges on the student progress page. For students who read in both

English and Spanish, you can set separate reading ranges for each language. By basing reading ranges on a student's ZPD or Lexile® range, you can encourage students to read at levels that are likely to promote growth.

If you set book-level goals instead, use them to help ensure students read at a level appropriate for them as individuals. It represents a minimum level of difficulty. Goals are set at the low end of students' ZPDs to encourage them to read freely throughout an appropriate range.

### The Goal-Setting Process

Follow these steps to set and adjust goals:

**1. Review the ZPD and the goals provided by the software.**

Do they seem realistic for each student—ambitious, yet attainable?

**2. Set the initial Reading Range or book-level goal.**

**3. Meet briefly with students one-on-one.**

Your objective is for students to take ownership of their goals. Have a conversation in which you and the student talk about how their reading is going and what they would like to accomplish. Make sure students record their goals on their Student Reading Log. (To find reproducible forms, select the Accelerated Reader® tile on the Home page, then select Resources.) Show students how to keep track of their progress by viewing their progress page or the TOPS Report after every quiz. The progress page includes students' progress toward points, reading range or book level, and average percent correct goals.

**4. Each marking period, check the data, adjust goals if needed, and confer.**

As the year goes on, your students will change, and you will learn more about their capabilities. Reflect that information in their reading practice goals. Before adjusting goals, review any new Star Reading scores. Have students' scores gone up significantly? Use the data in the Record Book or on the Summary Diagnostic Report to decide how

to edit goals. Compare what students have achieved against their goals. You'll see best practices for adjusting goals below and on the next page.

**5. Recognize students who meet their goals.**

Offering recognition based on meeting individualized goals means all students have an equal chance at success. Simple acknowledgments, like posting the names of students who meet their goals on a class bulletin board, are highly motivating.

## Practices for Adjusting Reading Practice Goals

Common Situations	Best Practices
Student is averaging 85 percent on Reading Practice Quizzes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise the average-percent-correct goal incrementally to 90 percent.</li> </ul>
Student is averaging close to 100 percent on Reading Practice Quizzes / Article Quizzes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage students to read across their Reading Range, including the top end. (If you are using book-level goals, increase the goal.)</li> <li>• Avoid raising the point goal at the same time. If you keep point expectations the same, the student will feel more comfortable</li> </ul>
Student is unable to maintain an average of 85 percent on quizzes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First, have the student try shorter texts within their Reading Range/ZPD.</li> <li>• If the student still struggles, lower the low end of their Reading Range/ZPD and the point goal. (If you are using book-level goals, lower the goal.)</li> <li>• Evaluate the student's reading skills and strategies, and provide support as needed.</li> </ul>
Student is unable to meet a point goal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure the student is staying on task.</li> <li>• Provide easy access to the library and/or computers so the student doesn't have to wait to find a new book or article.</li> <li>• If the student is an emergent bilingual and Spanish reader, try setting a Spanish Reading Range goal. Use the Biliteracy Report tab in the Record Book to find out more about the student's Spanish and English reading.</li> </ul>
Student is a high-ability reader.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't prohibit students from reading relatively easy texts that are appropriate for their grade in school, but encourage students to read harder texts as well. For example, 4th-graders who are reading at a 7th-grade level will likely want to read the same books their friends are reading. Allow them to do so while encouraging them to also tackle books that will help their reading skills develop.</li> <li>• Use the Goal Calculator in the software or the Goal-Setting Chart to identify a point goal that is more in line with the student's grade in school rather than the GE score.</li> <li>• Emphasize wide reading in a variety of genres.</li> </ul>

Common Situations	Best Practices
Student's Star Reading score has gone up.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the student has been consistently scoring 90 or 100 percent on Accelerated Reader quizzes, raise the top end of the student's ZPD and boost the book-level goal while keeping the point goal stable.</li> <li>• If the student is averaging below 85 percent on Accelerated Reader quizzes despite showing gains on Star Reading, find out why. Has the student been reading texts above the ZPD? After finishing a book, has the student waited more than 24 hours before taking a quiz? Does the student lack the comprehension strategies needed for longer texts?</li> </ul>
Student's Star Reading score has gone down.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the student has been doing well on quizzes and meeting goals, maintain the goals for the next marking period. Star Reading scores sometimes fluctuate due to differences in testing conditions.</li> </ul>