It is that time of year again - back to school - and with it the rush to the library to find AR books. If kids in K-6TH are attending a public school in Alabama, they will be tested to determine their reading grade level for the Accelerated Reader™ program by taking the STAR Reading computerized reading assessment. For those of you who are just learning about Accelerated Reader™ program or AR™ for the first time, it is a computer program developed by Renaissance Learning that tracks student’s reading and comprehension progress as the student takes comprehension quizzes on books they have read.

Basically, a student chooses a book that is on their reading grade level as determined by the STAR Reading assessment) and is also an AR™ book (you can check if the book has a quiz available by visiting www.ARbookfind.com).

The student reads the book either at home or in class, and takes a quiz on a device that has the Accelerated Reader™ program installed and is connected to the Renaissance Place network (usually at school). Once the student has taken a quiz on their selected book, they will receive a “point” value for the book. Every book that has been cataloged in the AR™ system with a quiz number has an assigned point value. Different books are worth different points. The point value for each book is determined by Renaissance Learning using ATOS (Advantage-Tasa Open Standard) Readability Formula and the length of the book. This sounds complicated but it basically comes down the difficulty of the book and how many words it has. So, lower reading grade levels in the first (1.0-1.9) and second (2.0-2.9) grade tend to be worth .5 points.

Teachers often assign reading goals with the amount of points they wish students to obtain by taking AR™ quizzes and will reward the students who reach their point goal with incentives. The reward is to encourage students to reach their assigned goal. However, from experience in working in the Children’s Department at the Gadsden Public Library, it is not in a student’s best interest to put off trying to reach their reading goal until the last minute so that they may earn the reward. Children should be encouraged to read on a daily basis. AR™ is meant to
encourage students to read by being allowed to read books they are interested in, so long as it in their reading level, versus only assigned reading books. The actual goal for using the Accelerated Reader™ program is for students to become stronger readers - not only in the ability to read the words as they are written, but to understand and comprehend what they read as well while developing a love for reading.

As a youth services librarian, you can help students to improve their reading skills, and the ability to be successful using the AR™ program. You can do this by being knowledgeable about the AR™ program, how to help your patrons in finding books that are in their reading grade level, and by guiding parents to available resources to help their children to be successful. Some tips you can share with parents on how to help their children include:

- Asking their child questions about the book they read before taking the quiz (especially helpful if your child is a reluctant or struggling reader)
- Making sure your child is reading books in their appropriate reading grade level,
- Making sure their child is reading on a regular basis.

I know AR™ can seem all consuming for a youth services librarian after school starts. It seems to be focused on the kids achieving a certain level of points versus instilling a love for reading. I have seen a child put a book back that they really wanted to read but couldn’t because it was not one in their reading level range and therefore, unable to test on. While it can be discouraging to those passionate about creating a love for reading, it is however, an opportunity to help find new books to fall in love with that meet their AR™ needs. Hang in there youth services! Arm yourself and your staff with the resources to better help kids…and their parents! Visit www.renlearn.com for more information about the Accelerated Reader™ program. In addition, reading grade levels (BL), points value, and quiz numbers for titles can be easily found at www.arbookfind.com. Good Luck!

*This article is not an endorsement of the Accelerated Reader program.*
The Summer Reading Statistics Google form was sent out on July 30.
The Materials Order Google form for Bicentennial year 2019 also went out on July 30.

Note:
These are separate forms this year.

The forms went out via the Public Library Director’s Listserv. Completed forms are due back by Sept. 30 at 11:55 p.m. If you do not reply to both forms, you will not receive materials for next year.

Be sure your Director/Interim Director gets you this very important email!
Musical Glasses

Learn about the scientific aspects of music with this fun learning activity:

01 Gather Supplies
Eight identical water glasses and water
Large set of measuring cups
Food coloring
Plastic spoon
Tape and something to write with

02 Fill
Using measuring cups, fill the eight cups with the following amounts of water:
14/8 cups, 12/8 cups, 10/8 cups, 8/8 cups,
6/8 cups, 4/8 cups, 2/8 cups, and 0/8 cups.
Color the water by adding a drop or two of food coloring. Don’t add anything to the empty glass.

03 Label
Starting with the glass with the most water and working down to the glass with the least, label your glasses from 1 to 8, and keep your glasses in that order.

04 Play
Using a plastic spoon, gently tap each glass and listen for the sound it makes. The glass with the most water will make the lowest pitch, and the glass with the least water will make the highest pitch.

String Painting

Here’s a fun process art activity that’s easy to set up and produces beautiful pieces:

01 Gather Supplies
String or thread (polyester thread works best)
Food coloring
Cardstock or a sketch pad
Small spoons
Scissors
Small bowls for colors

02 Cut and Dip
Place food coloring into bowls. Cut thread into pieces approximately 12 inches long, and dip the cut thread into the food coloring until it is almost completely immersed.

03 String it Up
Lift string out of the color and take your index finger and thumb to remove some of the excess. Lay your string on a piece of paper in a pattern of your choosing, and place another piece of paper on top. With hand firmly on the top paper, pull the string out of the inside. Open the paper to reveal a symmetrical painting on both pieces of paper.

STEAM Books

- Mixed: A Colorful Story
  Chung, Arree; 978-1250142733

- Splatter
  Alber, Diane; 978-0991248254

- How Does Sound Change
  Johnson, Robin; 978-0778705246

- Never Play Music Right Next to the Zoo
  Lithgow, John; 978-1442467439

- Sounds All Around
  Pfeffer, Wendy; 978-0062386700
Elsie Mae Has Something to Say
written by Nancy J. Cavanaugh
Released on Sept. 5, 2017
Review by Cassandra Brindle

For most children, the prospect of spending their summer in the middle of a swamp would not be an exciting one. For Elsie Mae, going to her grandparent’s place in the middle of Okefenokee Swamp is something she looks forward to all year. After all, at home she competes with her many siblings for her parent’s attention. She has chores. In the swamp she has her grandparents’ and favorite uncle Owen’s complete attention, a swamp to explore on a boat, and the family dogs to play with. For Elsie Mae - it is paradise.

This summer, however, there are problems. There is a shipping company who wants to drain the swamp to build a canal. There are hog bandits stealing hogs from all the swampers in Okefenokee. And worst of all? Her cousin has been sent to live with her grandparents for the summer while his preacher daddy and wife travel to bring religion to folks in Florida. She has to share her grandparents’ attention AND Henry James wants to follow her around all over the swamp and preach at her so he can practice being a preacher like his daddy.

But Elsie Mae has a plan. She’s written a letter to President Roosevelt about how wonderful Okefenokee Swamp is, and if she can catch the hog bandits and get her name in the newspaper, well, maybe the President will really pay attention to her and save the swamp! She doesn’t have a plan for her cousin Henry James yet, but surely she can figure out a solution for that problem too!

Elsie Mae Has Something to Say is an easy read that has a good story, fun characters, and a wonderful setting. The culture and setting are probably my favorite parts of this book, to be honest. From Cavanaugh’s afterword, that was her biggest inspiration for writing this book and it shows. She’s done what must have been a good deal of research to really give you the feel for life in the Okefenokee Swamp back in the 1930’s, a way of life that is now gone (at least in that swamp). There are also some good life lessons in the story with one of my favorites being that life isn’t always like, well, a story book. The goals Elsie Mae fights for have serious consequences, and while it ends on a positive note; change is still inevitable. It made for a fun, immersive read with well-rounded characters, and would be a solid addition to any juvenile collection.

Recommended for: Fans of general fiction, historical fiction, or stories with female leads.

Things to watch out for: Nothing too much. The worst thing I can think of is that one of Elsie Mae’s uncles talks about drowning a dog, and the book also mentions a preacher who was using his job to steal money. Offensive content is very mild and close to nonexistent.
HOMESCHOOL HANGOUT @ ONEONTA PUBLIC LIBRARY

While I remember hearing about another library doing special programs for homeschool students, I do not think that was the determining factor for us. After we won a YALSA/Dollar General Summer Learning Resources Grant to introduce our teens to Robotics and Coding, we were really interested in continuing a program that focused on STEAM. We had a group of homeschool students that came to our Summer Program, and we discussed the possibility of a monthly meeting. The first two meetings we focused on coding. They were excited to have their very own program. Then we moved onto origami for two meetings. More students showed up. For the past two meeting we have done the “Egg-Drop Challenge.” Our numbers have steadily increased and the age range continues to grow. We are now considering adding another program and splitting the programs between grade levels. We aren’t the first library to try this type of program, but it seems to fit perfectly in our community because we have a good number of homeschool families.

Send us your ideas & photos to feature your library here!
September 6
Five Things You Need to Know about Harassment Investigations
What if your organization is faced with a workplace harassment complaint? Having a solid harassment investigation process is vital — or you and your organization run the risk of being sued. Our free webinar, Five Things You Need to Know About Harassment Investigations, outlines everything you need to know to ensure your harassment investigation process meets current requirements. (Charity Village) https://charityvillage.com/cms/active-learning/webinars

Join an International Lunar Celebration!
International Observe the Moon Night (IONM) is a worldwide, public celebration of lunar science and exploration held annually since 2010. Tens of thousands of people participate each year, from 98 countries and 49 U.S. states (and counting). On October 20th, your library is invited to join this world-wide celebration by hosting an IONM event on one day each year to look at and learn about our Moon together. Join the STAR Net team and Vivian White of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific (ASP) and NASA’s Night Sky Network (NSN) to learn about how you can make the best of this annual event through hands-on activities, subject matter experts, NASA resources, and more! (STAR-Net) https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_CakfylRHx3WfBefwp9gxg

Make Do Share: Sustainable STEM Programming for Youth
Join us to learn about STEM and “making” in libraries featuring the Make Do Share curriculum that has been tried and tested in a rural library system in Washington State. Make Do Share was made by libraries for libraries and includes helpful tips to build your confidence while supporting 21st century learners. We will explore ways to incorporate STEM skills into existing programs and how to become a non-expert leader in your community’s STEM learning ecology. (Indiana State Library) https://continuinged.isl.in.gov/find-training/online-training-series/

September 11
Diversifying Your Book Club by Selection and Membership
Are you tired of reading the same books for your book clubs? Are you hoping to reach new audiences? Join Tiffany Carter, the manager of the West Indianapolis Branch Library for some tips and best practices to consider when choosing your book club selections and recruiting new participants. (Indiana State Library) https://continuinged.isl.in.gov/find-training/online-training-series/

Autistics in the Library: How Libraries Can More Effectively Serve Patrons and Employees on the Spectrum
As the autistic population continues to grow and become more visible across the lifespan, it’s important that libraries of all types know how to effectively serve patrons on the autism spectrum, foster a neuro-diverse profession by encouraging autistics to consider librarianship as a career, and successfully employ them as staff. This webinar will provide attendees with a mix of practical strategies and relevant anecdotes from an autistic librarian. Attendees will be encouraged to ask questions and share any helpful insights they may have on the topic. (Massachusetts Library System) https://calendar.masslibsystem.org/event/4391235

Becoming a Socially-Conscious Library
As our society becomes more socially aware, libraries (staff, boards and administrations) and our public are finding themselves caught in the middle of the discussion, interest and debate. This session intends to articulate what it means to be a socially-conscious library, issues libraries face in doing so and charting a path to full engagement as a socially-conscious library. (Washington State Library) https://www.sos.wa.gov/library/libraries/firsttuesdays/default.aspx

Reads for the Reluctant: Tips and Tools to Help Engage Every Potential Reader
It can be a difficult task to find the right book for a struggling or disconnected reader, but we’re here to help. During this webinar you’ll hear from representatives of Books on Tape/Learning Library, Macmillan Youth, and Lorimer Press, as well as from Allie Stevens, coordinator of this year’s Quick Picks for Reluctant Readers committee. They’ll offer you a variety of resources, including hi/lo titles and audiobooks, that will give you the tools you need to meet your reluctant readers where they’re at. (Booklist) https://www.booklistonline.com/webinars

Disasters Happen! Prepare During National Preparedness Month
Every September, National Preparedness Month reminds us to take time to prepare for disasters. This year’s theme is “Disasters Happen. Prepare Now. Learn How.” Tune into this webinar to see an overview of health information resources on preparedness topics, and learn more about making your library has plans to serve patrons when disasters occur. (Federal Depository Library Program) https://www.fdlp.gov/about-the-fdlp/fdlp-events-calendar

The Latest Must-Have Graphic Novels for Fall
From manga to memoir, graphic novels offer engaging and diverse stories for readers of all ages. Join moderator Tammy Lynn along with a panel of insiders who will share some of the hottest graphic novels hitting the shelves this season. (Library Journal) https://www.libraryjournal.com/?subpage=Events

September 12
Podcast Playground - Part 2 - Programming with Kids Podcasts
Come play in our Podcast Playground where we’ll listen, explore, and play with the evolving world of kids podcasting. In Part 2, we’ll play with how podcasts can connect with library collections, as well as share ideas for incorporating kids podcasts into programming to inspire curiosity and learning. (Association for Library Services to Children) http://www.ala.org/alsc/eleaming/live-webinars

Empower Your Students to Be Digital Leaders on Social Media
To become responsible and fluent users of social media technology, students need real-world opportunities to practice. In this edWebinar, Heather Callahan of Northwest Public Schools in Nebraska will show you how. (edWeb) https://home.edweb.net/upcoming-webinars/

September 13
The Great Divide: Bridging intergenerational gaps to fully engage your volunteers
This workshop will consider how to successfully implement volunteer succession planning by bridging the gap between millennial and boomer volunteers. By investigating and implementing innovative methods of engagement, your organization can facilitate the transfer of knowledge and experience between the leaders of today and the leaders of tomorrow. (Charity Village) https://charityvillage.com/cms/active-learning/webinars

How to Effectively Teach Social-Emotional Skills to Children Who Exhibit Challenging Behavior
In this webinar we will review why it is essential to develop or adopt a comprehensive social-emotional learning curriculum and discuss practical strategies that teachers can use to proactively teach children necessary social-emotional skills. We will also review how to promote social-emotional learning in the heat of the moment and throughout the day during typical classroom activities. (Early Childhood Investigations) https://www.earlychildhoodwebinars.com/presentations/

Reframing the Story: Investment in Black Men And Boys is Vital to Whole Community Health
In this webinar, speakers will come together to discuss the importance of redirecting philanthropic investments for justice-oriented collective action and impact, and how that translates in the real world. You will also have the opportunity to learn about the seven elements of the paid-in-full investment strategy, and how to apply this approach to your work, as a grant maker, nonprofit, government, or community-based entity. Finally, they will also talk about why investing in black men and boys is a key component of justice-oriented collective action, and vital to whole community health. (GrantSpace) https://grantspace.org/training/search/format/live/location/online/

Cultural Competence and Responsiveness
Join this free monthly webinar from YALSA. The September topic is on cultural competence and responsiveness. (YALSA) http://www.ala.org/yalsa/onlinelearning/webinar/free_competencies_webinars

Fall for These Must-Haves for Every Elementary to YA Reader
Entice the inquisitive minds of every reader with informative and engaging titles! Whether they’re interested in animal life, STEM resources, coding, biographies, arts and crafts, or YA and middle-grade fiction, readers of all levels will walk away feeling both enlightened and entertained. (Booklist) https://www.booklistonline.com/webinars
September 18

**Supporting Healthy Racial Identity Development for All Children**

While most white educators would never describe themselves as being prejudiced, studies have shown that unconscious (implicit) bias is alive and well in educational settings. How can white educators, including librarians in school and public libraries, learn not only to notice their bias, but also act in ways that will promote and support racial equity? Join us for this important, and sometimes uncomfortable, conversation on how to address white racial bias and discrimination to create healthy, equitable learning environments.

(Association for Library Service to Children) [http://www.ala.org/alsc/elearning/live-webinars](http://www.ala.org/alsc/elearning/live-webinars)

**How to Write Compelling Fundraising Letters**

Many schools still send fundraising letters to parents and alumni via snail mail but have no way to know whether the letters are effective. In this webinar, you’ll learn how to write fundraising letters that will compel parents and alumni to take action and donate to your school. This webinar should also be relevant to libraries.


**Supercharge Your Collection with New Fall Nonfiction**

What’s missing from your collection? New and engaging nonfiction! From learning about forest babies to exploring STEAM career opportunities -- and everything in between -- these fun and informational series and titles are sure to inspire your curious young readers. Join publishing insiders for an array of nonfiction to deck out your shelves this fall!

(School Library Journal) [https://www.slj.com/?subpage=Events](https://www.slj.com/?subpage=Events)

September 20

**Bookflix for Public Libraries, School, and Home**

A literacy resource for grades PreK-3 that pairs classic fictional video storybooks with related eBooks. Animation, audio and interactive games are designed to reinforce core reading skills. Bookflix has a brand new look, better searching, new book pairs, and more!

(They have eliminated the need for Flash) Join Chris Bozarthzone! Better Than Bullet Points

[https://register.gotowebinar.com/](https://register.gotowebinar.com/)

**Ditching Dewey -- How to Adopt Bookstore Style Organization**

The Keller Public Library stopped using the Dewey Decimal System in favor of bookstore style organization in January 2017. Library Services Manager Rae Cheney will tell you why they got rid of Dewey, give step-by-step instructions for making the change at your library, and share the results after making the switch (spoiler alert: it’s been great!). She will also cover ways to blend bookstore style organization with Dewey if you aren’t quite ready to call it quits. This information is applicable to all library types and there will be plenty of time for questions and answers to help you figure out how to make subject classification work for your institution.

(Texas State Library & Archives Commission) [https://www.tsl.texas.gov/fit/workshops/webinars/index.html](https://www.tsl.texas.gov/fit/workshops/webinars/index.html)

**Getting Unstuck: The Secret Life of Procrastinators**

Do you believe you work best under pressure? Do you avoid tasks and deliberately look for distractions? Are you late for appointments? Have a hard time completing projects? If you struggle with any of these you may be a procrastinator. Join this session to explore why we procrastinate and how we can stop.

(Colorado State Library) [https://cslnession.cslibs.net/](https://cslnession.cslibs.net/)

**Look Before You Leap: What You Need to Know Before You Write That Grant**

Jumping into grant writing without an understanding of the process and obligations can be a costly mistake for many nonprofit organizations. During this webinar, Alice Ruhnke, Founder and Owner of The Grant Advantage, will discuss common misconceptions in the grant seeking process, requirements most funders expect nonprofit organizations will fulfill, and how to move from simply being eligible to apply to creating strong, competitive applications. During the 30-minutes, participants will not only gain knowledge, but also receive resources to help them in their grant seeking journey.

(TechSoup) [https://www.techsoup.org/community/events-webinars/default](https://www.techsoup.org/community/events-webinars/default)

**No Fear Coding: How to Start a Coding Club and Why It Matters**

Librarian Alyssa Loya shares her story of failures and successes in launching a coding club in her elementary school. This webinar will boost your confidence, arm you with the basics of coding, and give you resources for teaching computational thinking without even needing to touch a computer!

(School Library Journal) [https://www.slj.com/?subpage=Events](https://www.slj.com/?subpage=Events)

**Bozarthzone! Better Than Bullet Points**

Effective e-learning involves much more than just putting PowerPoint shows on the Web. In this session, we’ll explore solid ideas for transforming bullet-based content into compelling, engaging, interactive online learning programs.

(InSync Training) [https://www.insynctraining.com/complimentary-programs/](https://www.insynctraining.com/complimentary-programs/)

**Live Webcast: Innovative Programming Beyond Library Walls**

Join the National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) and library staff from across the country at our annual webcast. Libraries and their staffs are working tirelessly to serve families where they live, work, and play within their communities. Scott Allen, deputy director of the Public Library Association, will moderate the discussion in makerspaces, accessibility, and inclusion.

(GrantSpace) [https://www.edweb.net/emergingtech](https://www.edweb.net/emergingtech)

**Wonder-Filled Early Childhood Environments: Engaging All Children in Learning**

In this webinar we’ll discuss both the basics of high quality early childhood environments -what is essential in any setting for a given age group–and the hula hoops--the things that make the setting just right for the children, and teachers, who live and learn in it.

(Early Childhood Investigations) [https://www.earlychildhoodwebinars.com/presentations/](https://www.earlychildhoodwebinars.com/presentations/)

**Introduction to Proposal Writing**

This class will provide you with an overview of how to write a standard project proposal to a foundation.

(GrantSpace) [https://www.grantspace.org/training/search/format/live/location/online](https://www.grantspace.org/training/search/format/live/location/online)

**Representing the Rainbow in Young Adult Literature**

Michael Carl and Christine Jenkins, co-authors of Representing the Rainbow in Young Adult Literature: LGBTQ+ Content since 1968, published this April by Rowman & Littlefield, will discuss lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans-gender literature for young adults. While they will give some attention to the recent history of the field, they will focus principally on the best of the current LGBT books, including fiction, nonfiction, and graphic novels.

(BooKSafe) [https://alapublishing.webex.com/alapublishing/onstage/g.php?MTID=e66f38287a3e6e4d23h559cde6715901](https://alapublishing.webex.com/alapublishing/onstage/g.php?MTID=e66f38287a3e6e4d23h559cde6715901)

**Accessible Makerspaces**

As makerspaces continue to grow in popularity in library settings are we as librarians ensuring accessibility for all students and library patrons? Do we look at our spaces, activities, outcomes and consider inclusion of all students? Join Heather Moorefield-Lang for a rich discussion in makerspaces, accessibility, and inclusion.

(American Association of School Librarians) [http://www.ala.org/aasl/aaslcollaborate/upcoming](http://www.ala.org/aasl/aaslcollaborate/upcoming)

**Out of This World Engineering**

Space isn’t just for scientists – it’s also for engineers! Join STAR Net as we take a look at some of the newest activities on the STEM Activity Clearinghouse that feature engineering design challenges with a space science theme. As we create rockets and rovers, we’ll be following the engineering design process: think, build, test, and do it again. Come and learn how you can make your 2018 and 2019 STEM programs blast off!

(STAR-Net) [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/3001001475](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/3001001475)

**Innovative-programming-beyond-library-walls-tickets.html](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/live-webcast-innovative-programming-beyond-library-walls-tickets-49041734147tickets)