

Home Learning

Emmbrook Junior School

Home learning tasks are opportunities to reinforce key skills and knowledge and should be enjoyable and manageable for all concerned. We respect that evenings and weekends are precious for families and can sometimes be very busy. If homework becomes a chore or a source of conflict, then it ceases to be a constructive aspect of teaching and learning. Therefore, we have tailored our home-learning expectations accordingly. Should you wish to do additional work with your child at home, we have signposted you to some really useful and good quality online resources.

Why do we set home learning tasks?

- To inform and involve parents and carers in their child's learning
- To further stimulate enthusiasm for learning
- To provide an opportunity to practice and reinforce key skills
- To encourage good habits of organisation and self-discipline in preparation for secondary school

Our Expectations:

We expect children to maintain the same standards for presentation as we set in school i.e. use their best handwriting and a sharp pencil or handwriting pen.

1. Daily Reading (5 x a week)
2. Regular Times Table Practice (at least 3 x a week)
3. Regular spelling practice (and/or spelling related tasks) from a set list of words (at least 3 x a week)
4. One set of themed Grammar, Punctuation or Spelling questions a week from their CGP workbook (10-20 mins)
5. Termly Family Project Grid linked to that term's learning (completed in second half of term)

Further Details:

1. Reading

Daily Reading - at least five times a week for a minimum of ten minutes.

- Each child will choose a library book to bring home which is pitched within their levelled reading range. [More information on Accelerated Reader and book levels can be found in Appendix 8.](#)
- Children can either read to an adult or independently. (This should ideally be their school book but could also be a book from home.) [You can find our Top Tips for supporting reading at home in Appendix 7.](#)
- Their reading record must be signed and dated by you or your child after each session.
- Staff will provide encouragement to children who have not been reading regularly at home.
- When your child finishes their school reading book, they will do a short, multiple-choice quiz in school to assess their comprehension of what they have read.
- There are opportunities each week for children to change their books once they have finished their current one. Therefore, please make sure your child has their school book in their bag each day.

2. Multiplication tables and related number facts

Regular Times Table Practice - at least 3 x a week

- We aim for all children to have mastered their times tables and related division facts up to 12 x 12 by the end of Year 4.

- Quick recall of times tables and related number facts remains a focus for Years 5 and 6 too as they underpin many areas of Maths and can be used to solve much larger calculations. Even if your child already knows their times tables, they should continue to challenge themselves to develop their speed and accuracy this term.
- Every child has a log-in for **Times Table Rock Stars**. Times Table Rock Stars is an online program that provides a fun way of improving children's times table fluency. We actively encourage every child to regularly log on as playing for just 5 or 10 minutes a day can vastly improve their knowledge and speed of recall. The more your child plays, the more their skills will improve. ([Further details can be found in Appendix 6](#)).
- By playing a 'gig' in Times Tables Rock Stars, your child will be given a baseline assessment to identify what they already know and where they need to improve.
- Every week, we will test the children in school on their multiplication tables. This will also help your child to identify tables to focus on.
- [There are useful strategies to support children to learn times tables and related division facts in Appendix 5.](#)

3. Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling

One set of themed Grammar, Punctuation or Spelling questions a week (10-20 mins)

- Each child will soon bring home a **CGP KS2 English Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling Targeted Question Book** relevant for their year group.
- **Each week**, your child will be directed to do one set of questions to complete that week and return their book to school the **following week**. (Individual year groups will inform you of the specific days.)
- Each set of questions is themed and will be linked to a key learning point that they need to reinforce.
- The questions should take the children between 10-20 minutes to complete.
- Answers are provided at the back of the book. **Please mark the questions with your child**. There is also a space for them to evaluate how confident they feel which we encourage them to fill in.
- The teacher will spend time in class going through any tricky questions and gauging confidence levels and understanding at the end of each week.
- Some children may be sent home something more personalised better suited to their needs.
- **It is important that your child only does the questions we set each week. Please do not allow them to work through other units.** We will work through the book steadily throughout the year.

4. Spelling:

Regular spelling practice – at least 3 x a week

- We have adapted our spelling homework to make it more structured and to allow the broadening of vocabulary knowledge for those who have been successful in learning their words.
- **By 17th September, each child will be sent home with a set list of words to learn and reinforce across the half term.** (These will be stuck into their blue homework book.)
- They will get a **new list of words at the start of every half term** except for the final half term in the summer, where they will be set reinforcement spelling tasks.
- The lists are made up of the National Curriculum statutory words, a mixture of words pupils frequently use in their writing and those which they often misspell. Some of the words are common 'exception words' which do not follow a set pattern or rule, and some link to the spelling patterns the children learn in their spelling lessons. Year 6 will focus on reinforcing statutory words and spelling patterns and on words that relate to their learning for the term.
- **We expect each child to learn 3-5 of the words each week.** [There are useful spelling strategies in Appendix 2.](#)
- **Please do not worry if your child brings home a list of words that they are already secure on.** Children who are secure on all of their words before the end of half term will be set tasks relating to one or more of the words each week. ([An example sheet can be found in Appendix 3.](#))

- We test children on their list of words a couple of times each half term as well as provide weekly opportunities for the children to self-test and quiz each other. We also assess the children using a diagnostic spelling test at the start of each term and again at the end of each term as part of assessment week.

5. Family Project Grids:

1 grid a term, completed during the second half of each term, linked to the learning for the term

- The teachers will suggest a range of tasks (linked to the new learning and spanning a variety of curriculum areas) in order to capture children's imagination and to help build a broad knowledge base about their new topic.
- These tasks should be done as independently as possible but we also encourage lots of collaborative discussion, research and planning at home before your child embarks on the various tasks.
- The family project grids are an entirely optional source of home-learning however we encourage the children to attempt at least three of the tasks.
- The grids will be sent home the week before each half-term holiday (in October, February and May) and can be completed throughout the second half of each term. This allows the children to really pace themselves and focus on the quality of what they produce.
- Further instructions and guidance on the grids and on how to submit work will be provided by the teacher nearer the time.

Year 6 Revision

Year 6 children will be given additional work/revision materials in the lead up to their SATs. We use past SATS papers as part of our on-going assessment so it would be really helpful if parents DID NOT work through any of these at home. This will help us ensure that our assessments in school are accurate in terms of children's current strengths and gaps in learning.

Appendices:

1. [Useful Websites](#)
2. [Spelling Strategies](#)
3. [Blank Spelling Etymology Home Learning Sheet](#)
4. [Spelling Lists for each year group](#)
5. [Top Tips for Learning Times Tables](#)
6. [A Parent's Guide to Times Table Rock Stars \(TTRS\)](#)
7. [Top Tips for supporting reading at home](#)
8. [A Parent's Guide to Accelerated Reader](#)

1. Useful Websites

Parents often ask us if we can recommend any websites or apps that will support and enhance their child's home-learning in the core subjects. This is not an exhaustive list but here are a few of our favourites:

Maths

- **Primary Games** - <http://www.primarygames.co.uk/> - lots of maths content in the form of games and challenges
- **Maths Zone** - <http://www.mathszone.co.uk/> - games and activities covering mainly the KS2 curriculum
- **Primary Games Arena** - <http://www.primarygamesarena.com/Subjects/Maths> - plenty of games with a handy tick list to indicate appropriate year groups

- **Primary Homework Help** - <http://www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/maths/> - a range of games and investigations for different areas of maths
- **Top Marks** - <https://www.topmarks.co.uk/maths-games/7-11-years/mental-maths> - plenty of games for improving mental agility
- **Crickweb** - <http://www.crickweb.co.uk/ks2numeracy.html> - resources and games on lots of different topics including word problems and statistics
- **BBC Bitesize** - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize> - useful for revision
- **Doodle Maths** – a downloadable app (with a monthly charge). It is a multi-award-winning maths program that is proven to boost confidence and attainment in maths. It builds maths confidence in your child with a programme tailored to their strengths and weaknesses. It is fully aligned to the national curriculum.

Times Tables:

- Times Table Rock Stars (We have a school subscription to this)
- Teaching Tables - <http://www.teachingtables.co.uk/> - various games for practising times tables

For our Mathematicians who enjoy a challenge:

<https://nrich.maths.org/7737>

<http://www.nace.co.uk/>

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/gifted_and_talented/

English:

Literacy Shed - <https://www.literacyshed.com/home.html> – Fab video clips to inspire writing

BBC Bitesize for English KS2 - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

The School Run - <https://www.theschoolrun.com/> - Really good for children (and parents) to check up on terminology and for examples and worksheets.

Reading: We are often asked by parents for book recommendations. These websites will provide you with a synopsis and review of recommended books.

<https://www.lovereading4kids.co.uk/> <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/>

Spelling: ‘Spelling Test’ by Squeebles is a free app aimed at helping 5 to 11-year-old children practise their spellings in a fun, motivating environment. It allows you to set up your own personalised spelling tests, as well as download from over 150 pre-recorded tests based on the UK national curriculum, containing over 1800 words. You might find this a motivating way to support your child at home.

2. Spelling Strategies

To support your child at home, we have outlined some useful spelling strategies for your child to use.

Consider:

- *Limiting the number of words to five or less a week to ensure success and enable deeper learning*
- *Learning spellings in a given sentence and generating sentences for each word*

Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check

Look: first look at the whole word carefully and if there is one part of the word that is difficult, look at that part in more detail.

Say: say the word as you look at it, using different ways of pronouncing it if that will make it more memorable.

Cover: cover the word.

Write: write the word from memory, saying the word as you do so.

Check: Have you got it right? If yes, try writing it again and again! if not, start again – look, say, cover, write, check.

Drawing around the word to show the shape



Draw around the words making a clear distinction in size where there are ascenders (letters with a tall line e.g. b, d, h, k, l) and descenders (letters with a line that hangs down e.g. y, p, j). Look carefully at the shape of the word and the letters in each box. Now try to write the word making sure that you get the same shape.

Pyramid Words

This method of learning words forces you to think of each letter separately. You can then reverse the process so that you end up with a diamond.

p
py
pyr
pyra
pyram
pyrami
pyramid

Words without Vowels

This strategy is useful where the vowel choices are the challenge in the words. Write the words without the vowels and pupils have to choose the correct grapheme (the unit of writing that represents a sound e.g. ea, o, ie) to put in the space. For example, for the word field:

f_____ld

Find Words Within the Word

Use a different colour to highlight a word within your spelling.

totally If the word you are trying to spell doesn't have any words in it without rearranging the letters, don't worry. You can also see how many words you can make using the letters in that word. For example, in 'breath', I can spell 'bear', 'tear', 'hat' etc. This will familiarise you with the letters that are being used in that word.

totally

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Rainbow Writing

Rainbow writing. Using coloured pencils in different ways can help to make parts of words memorable. You could highlight the tricky parts of the word or write the tricky part in a different colour. You could also write each letter in a different colour, or write the word in red, then overlay in orange, yellow and so on.

Using the word in a sentence

Writing sentences with the spelling words in helps to see the word in a context. This means that you would be more likely to use it correctly in your everyday writing. Write the sentence and then carefully check the spellings of your words before going onto the next word.

Toss around the 'Spelling Ball'

Here's a fun game that the whole family can enjoy. Stand together in a circle with a ball. Call out a word, toss the ball to another person, and have that person spell out the word, and so on. If the word isn't spelled correctly, then whoever has the ball tosses it to another person who will try to spell it. You can play this even with two players.

Use magazine clippings to familiarise with letters

Cut out the letters from a newspaper or magazine to spell words. This will encourage learners to consider each letter carefully and individually, while creating visual representations of the words as a helpful memory aid. You can even post the words somewhere you might find useful, so you see it often (e.g. on the bathroom mirror, on the fridge etc.).

Create a 'Spelling Train' to have fun while spelling words

Get a family member to say a word aloud and you have to write it down. Using the last letter in that word, you then have to write another word beginning with that last letter. You can continue the 'spelling train' using the last letter of the new word. For example:

Toe – Eat – Tea – Ant – Tin

Drawing an image around the word.

This strategy is all about making a word memorable. It links to meaning in order to try to make the spelling noticeable. You can't use this method as your main method of learning spellings, but it might work on those that are just a little more difficult to remember.



3. Blank Spelling Etymology Home Learning Sheet

<p>Definition:</p>	<p>What syllables make up this word?</p> <p>Syl la ble</p>	<p>What word class(es) does this word belong to?</p>
<p>Synonyms and antonyms:</p>	<p>My word is:</p> 	<p>Rhyming words:</p>
<p>Can you add suffixes to make new words?</p>	<p>Can you add any prefixes to make new words?</p>	<p>Word pairs:</p>
<p>Phrases:</p>	<p>Sentences:</p>	

4. Spelling Lists for each Year Group

Your child will be given a new list of words to learn and/or to explore each half term. In the final half term, reinforcement spelling activities will be set.

Spelling lists for Y3

These lists reinforce the Y2 NC statutory words and move onto the Y3 & Y4 statutory words.

1 Dove	old, cold, gold, hold, told, door, floor, poor, find, kind, mind, behind, child, children, wild, climb.
2 Jay	fast, last, past, class, grass, pass, plant, path, bath, great, break, steak, move, prove, improve, could, should, would.
3 Owl	because, every, everybody, even, after, father, hour, sure, sugar, any, many, clothes, busy, water, again, half, money.
4 Swan	eye, Mr, Mrs, parents, Christmas, pretty, beautiful, people, appear, earth, enough, February, forward, often, thought, through, though, although
5 Wren	heard, learn, early, guard, naughty, caught, answer, build, certain, decide, describe, difficult, group, history, possible, believe, complete.

Spelling lists for Y4

These lists complete the Y3 & 4 NC statutory words and move onto the Y5 & Y6 statutory words.

1 Eagle	business, eight, famous, favourite, height, imagine, increase, important, interest, pressure, reign, various, weight, believe, ordinary, particular, minute, library.
2 Finch	address, centre, circle, difficult, disappear, length, notice, fruit, recent, arrive, breath, breathe, heart, opposite, strange, straight, popular, probably.
3 Heron	position, mention, question, guide, bicycle, exercise, perhaps, quarter, promise, remember, sentence, grammar, extreme, complete, natural, calendar, suppose, surprise.
4 Robin	possession, century, consider, continue, disappear, experience, experiment, knowledge, material, medicine, peculiar, potatoes, purpose, regular, separate, special, strength, therefore, woman.
5 Swift	accidentally, actually, occasionally, bargain, forty, twelfth, occur, occupy, system, variety, muscle, leisure, average, rhyme, rhythm, suggest, stomach, vegetable.

Spelling lists for Y5

These lists complete the Y5 & Y6 NC statutory words.

1 Kestrel	bruise, category, cemetery, criticise, definite, develop, familiar, identity, individual, interfere, language, lightning, queue, relevant, secretary, shoulder, signature, symbol.
2 Parrot	available, awkward, committee, communicate, community, desperate, determined, dictionary, existence, explanation, foreign, frequently, recognise, restaurant, rhythm, sincerely, temperature.
3 Pigeon	accommodate, accompany, according, aggressive, apparent, attached, correspond, embarrass, exaggerate, excellent, immediately, interrupt, necessary, profession, programme, recommend, sufficient.
4 Sparrow	ancient, appreciate, competition, controversy, curiosity, disastrous, environment, hindrance, marvellous, opportunity, parliament, prejudice, privilege, pronunciation, sacrifice, soldier, thorough, vehicle.
5 Swallow	achieve, amateur, conscience, conscious, convenience, especially, government, guarantee, persuade, physical, mischievous, neighbour, nuisance, yacht.

Spelling work / lists for Y6

If a child is insecure on the statutory spellings, spellings are set for homework according to need. Those who are secure will complete etymology and vocabulary work throughout the year.

These lists contain subject-specific vocabulary relating to each terms learning.

1	culture, design, equate, feature, focus, institute, normal, participate, perceive, region.
2	symbol, transit, trend, abstract, accurate, aggregate, allocate, attach, bond, capable.
3	ignorance, specify, migrate, technique, apparent, attribute, presume, emerge, ethnic, goal.
4	despite, dimension, perspective, occupy, overall, parallel, principal, professional, promote, status.
5	entity, evolve, expose, facilitate, generation, liberal, mental, network, notion, objective.

5. Top Tips for Learning Times Tables

By ensuring your child is confident with their times tables, you will be giving them some essential tools for success in maths. Our times tables top tips will provide some useful advice and great ideas to help you support your child in learning their times tables.

1. Get them familiar with multiplication concepts

The first step with multiplication is to make sure your child is familiar with what the numbers in multiplications really represent. Before they can cope with multiplication they need to be confident with sequences of numbers.

You can start when your child is quite young by practising counting in twos and threes, making number patterns and solving simple mathematical problems. Counting objects, making sets of similar objects and using blocks, LEGO or snap cubes can all help to increase your child's confidence with number bonds and multiplication facts.

2. Use what they already know

If your child learns how to double and half numbers this will help them to make connections between different times tables, for example the 2, 4, and 8 times tables.

$8 \times 4 = 32$ therefore $4 \times 4 = 16$ and $2 \times 4 = 8$

If your child already knows that 10×7 is **70** and 2×7 is **14**, then to find out what 12×7 is, they can add the two answers together to get **84**.

3. Practise tables as a time-filler

When you're sitting at traffic lights or waiting in the doctor's surgery it is the perfect opportunity for a bit of times table practice! It's always better (for both your child and you!) to just spend a few minutes reciting or testing times tables rather than going into overdrive and spending too long practising them.

4. Use the right vocabulary

Make sure you are using the right language to talk about multiplication.

Take a simple multiplication calculation, such as $3 \times 5 = 15$. The 3 and the 5 are what we call **factors** of 15 and 15 is a **multiple** of 3 and 5.

You can also demonstrate this by looking at the whole 3 times table written out in a list. Point out that each answer is a number that is a multiple of 3.

5. Help them with the ones they find tricky

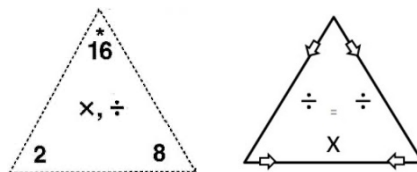
There are usually one or two multiplication facts in each times table that are more difficult. When you notice that your child is stumbling over the same fact each time, try to give them extra practice. You could even get your child to write the fact out in a fun way on a piece of card and then stick it somewhere prominent (like on the fridge) so that they have an extra reminder!

6. Use a number grid

Printing off a simple 10 x 10 number grid can be a great way to demonstrate how times tables relate to number sequences. You can get your child to colour in multiples of different numbers on different number squares so that they can clearly see the number patterns.

7. Divide and conquer

As well as learning the times tables, your child should also know the division facts for each times table. (For example, if 3 times 5 is 15, 15 divided by 5 is 3, and 15 divided by 3 is 5.) A triangle can help children to visualise how this works.



8. Make it real

The danger with too much rote learning of times tables is that children can fail to see the use of times tables in real life. Try to take opportunities to get your child to use multiplication in problem solving, for example working out quantities for scaling up a recipe, or calculating the price of more than one item of shopping.

9. Create a challenge

Make it fun by turning times table practice into a competition or challenge for your child, by timing them and keeping a record of their scores. You could even join in yourself and set a challenge to learn a more difficult times table, such as the 13 times table and get your child to test you at the end of the week in exchange for testing them.

10. Useful tricks!

We all know that the 9 times table can be done on our fingers and the 11 times tables is easy to remember! Explore other patterns and strategies with your child to help them learn their times tables. Rhymes and ‘funny sayings’ are really helpful when learning the tricky tables, as are times tables songs which are readily available on music download sites.

Wakey Wakey Rise and Shine, 7 x 7 is 49

Chanting “Five, six, seven, eight” might help them to remember 7 x 8 = 56

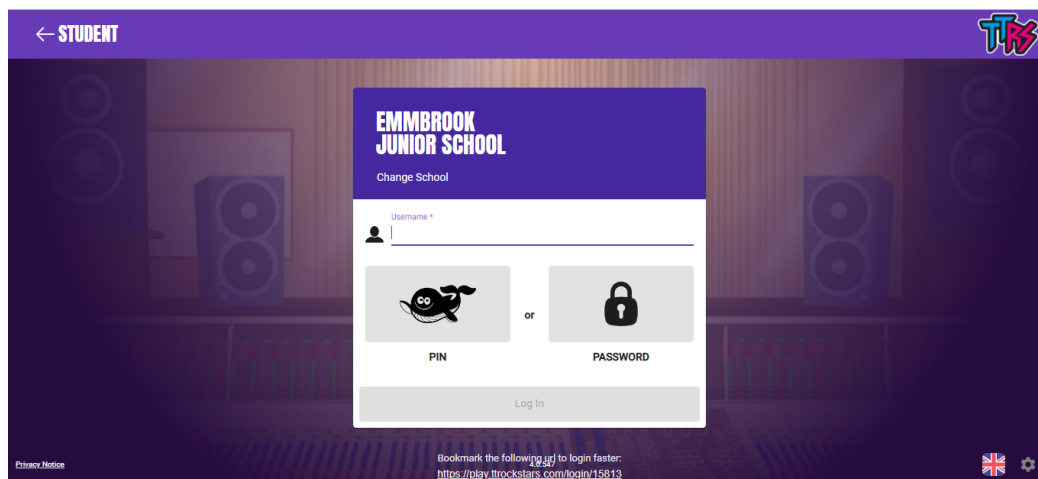
I skate and skate and hit the floor, 8 x 8 is 64

Times Table Rock Stars

6. A Parent’s Guide to Times Table Rock Stars

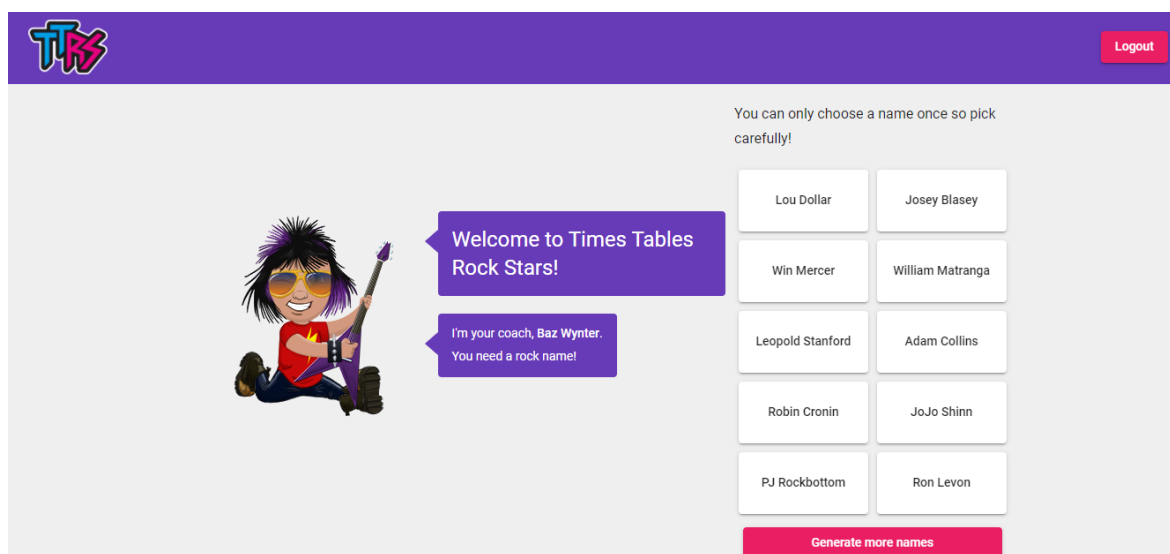
As a school, we have signed up for the online resource, Times Tables Rock Stars. Times Tables Rock Stars automatically generates times tables questions for your child to practise based on their previous performances. As they progress, the times tables they are tested on will progress. If your child already knows their times tables, this gives them the opportunity to improve their fluency and take on people around the world!

To activate your child’s Times Tables Rock Stars account, go to: <https://play.ttrockstars.com/login/15813>



We have used the same password and username as your Teams access (without the @emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk) i.e. the Teams username childa@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk will just be the username **childa** for Times Tables Rock Stars.

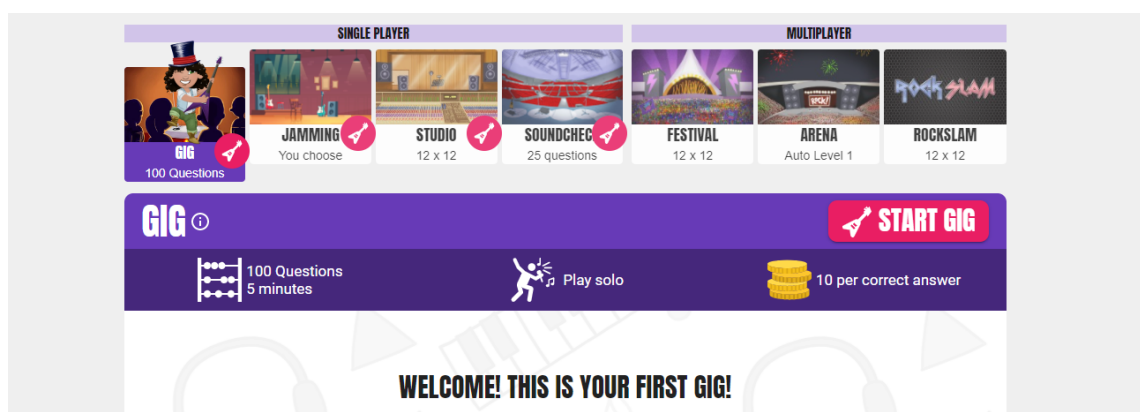
The first time your child logs on, they will be asked to choose a Rock Star name from the selection. This will be the name associated with them and how they will be identified online for the whole of their Rock Star career so choose carefully! Children are only identified by their Rock Star name online.



Children can also create their own avatar to represent them. Playing in the events generates rock star coins which can be spent on items for their avatar. This "currency" is only on Times Table Rock Stars and is not linked to real life money. The only way children can get items for their avatar is by playing Rock Star games. The more they play, the more they earn and the more they improve.

Once your child has logged on, they will have various options as to what to play. Here's a brief rundown on each.

Gig: First off, you will need to do a Gig. They are the baseline assessments to see what your child already knows. As it's the first time you've logged in, you'll need to do a gig to see what you know. You have 5 minutes to answer as many times tables as you can. They move up the tables in line with the National Curriculum, starting with 10s, 2s and 5s and finishing with 12s. This assessment is the same for everyone and the results will automatically generate the appropriate times tables to work on and show you the ones you know. Not everyone will complete all the times tables in 5 minutes - and that's fine. Your child will be prompted to do another gig after they have made a certain amount of progression.



Garage: This is the place to practise your times tables, based on your assessment, and move up levels. Garage gives you a minute to answer random questions within your generated level. Scoring 20 in a Garage session will move you up to the next level (based on the research showing known number facts should be recalled and entered with 3 seconds). After you've done all the Garage levels for that times table, you will be

reassessed in a Gig. If you do really well in a Gig, you may skip a times table in Garage (because you have shown you know those numbers). Likewise, if you don't do as well as expected in a Gig, the system may send you back to a Garage level you have already done to reinforce the learning. There is no penalty for skipping levels or being sent back in this way. It's all part of the programme to improve knowledge and fluency.

Jamming: You can pick 10, 20 or 30 questions on the times table of your choice. You can pick to do multiply, divide or a mix. There is no time limit. It is tempting to do lots of Jamming but it won't move you on if you keep doing the same times tables.

Studio: This gives you one minute to see how many random questions up to 12×12 (and associated division facts) you can answer, in order to set your Rock Star performer status!

Soundcheck: This gives you 25 random questions up to 12×12 (and associated division facts), with 6 seconds per question. (This is in line with end of Year 4 expectations set by the government).

The last two options may be challenging if not all number facts are known. However, anyone can try any of these modes at any time.

The multiplayer options give children the chance to play with other Rock Stars.

Festivals: These are **live** events where you can play with anyone in the world on all times tables up to 12×12 . Check the leader board at the end to see how you compared to other players and try to improve your performance each time.

Arena: This gives you the chance to play with others from school at your generated times table level **live** – pick an event and go! Remember, these two events are live, so your classmates will need to be online at the same time as you and in the same arena for you to play together.

Rockslam: You can challenge anyone in school at any time in all times tables up to 12×12 . You'll need to know their Rock Star name to challenge them - or just pick someone at random from a class. This challenge will be waiting for them when they next log on. You may receive Rockslam challenges too – you don't have to answer them.

Only Garage is set to the child's generated level and so children may find the other events tricky as they cover all the times tables, even the ones that may be outside their current range. That doesn't stop them from having a go though!

A big part of this times table programme is fluency and speed. It may take more than 3 seconds to answer a question; that doesn't mean your child can not do the question. Improved fluency allows children to progress in related maths skills.

We challenge children to be the fastest in the class / school, the most improved performer, the highest earner and to challenge people around the world.

Internet Safety: There is no messaging system within Times Table Rock Stars. Online activity is limited to a scoreboard at the end of the event to see how you compared to others. Again, only the Rock Star name is displayed.

Get the app! There is a free Times Table Rock Stars app (provided by Maths Circle) so you can download and practise on other devices. To log on to this, you'll need to say what school you are a member of before logging in as above. Make sure you pick the correct school or your log in won't work!

Please also refer to the Times Table Rock Stars User Guide videos on our school website, put together by our very own Mr. Fox.

7. Top Tips for supporting reading at home

**Our number one tip is to:
Talk about what you've read!**

Always talk to your child about the book; about the illustrations, the characters, the themes, the plot, their favourite part and so on. Get your child to think of questions they can ask you to test if you've been listening! Ask how they think a particular character in a story might be feeling. Ask them to tell you what they would do if they were in the story, or what they think is going to happen next. These questions encourage your child to say more than 'yes' or 'no' and help them develop important comprehension, deduction and inference skills.

Ask them a couple of questions about what they have read to gauge their understanding. Below are a set of questions grouped by the reading skill they develop which will help you gauge how well your child has understood what they have read. Dip in and out of these questions as you wish.

Useful Question Stems

Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do the words and suggest about the character, setting and mood? • Which word tells you that....? • Which keyword tells you about the character/setting/mood? • Find one word in the text which means..... • Find and highlight the word that is closest in meaning to..... • Find a word or phrase which shows/suggests that.....
Infer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find and copy a group of words which show that... • How do these words make the reader feel? How does this paragraph suggest this? • How do the descriptions of show that they are • How can you tell that..... • What impression of do you get from these paragraphs? • What voice might these characters use? • What was thinking when..... • Who is telling the story?
Predict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the cover what do you think this text is going to be about? • What is happening now? What happened before this? What will happen after? • What does this paragraph suggest will happen next? What makes you think this? • Do you think the choice of setting will influence how the plot develops? • Do you think... will happen? Yes, no or maybe? Explain your answer using evidence from text.
Explain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is the text arranged in this way? • What structures has the author used? • What is the purpose of this text feature? • Is the use of effective? • The mood of the character changes throughout the text. Find the phrases which show this. • What is the author's point of view? • What affect does have on the audience? • How does the author engage the reader here? • Which words and phrases did effectively? • Which section was the most interesting/exciting part?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are these sections linked?
Retrieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe this story/text? What genre is it? How do you know? • How did...? • How often...? • Who had...? Who is...? Who did....? • What happened to...? • What does.... do? • How is? • What can you learn from from this section? • Give one example of..... • The story is told from whose perspective?
Sequence and Summarise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you number these events 1-5 in the order that they happened? • What happened after? • What was the first thing that happened in the story? • Can you summarise in a sentence the opening/middle/end of the story? • In what order do these chapter headings come in the story?

Top Ten Tips for Reading with your Child

1. Find the right level

When reading outside of school, encourage your child to choose a book they *want* to read. Success is key. Bear in mind that struggling with a book with many unknown words in can cause them to become frustrated or demotivated. Read harder books to them if they want to hear more complex stories but let them read the easy bits. Read their favourite book again and again with them. Repetition helps your son or daughter learn new vocabulary.

2. Make a regular time together

Try building a regular story time into your child's routine. This might be at bedtime. This gives valuable and enjoyable quality time together. Studies show that there is a gender gap with girls reading more than boys. Encourage male members to read to your child as well.

3. Make Reading enjoyable

Set aside a quiet time with no distractions. Sit with your child if need be or help them find a place where they would like to read. Try not to pressurise your child if they are reluctant and if they lose interest, then do something else.

4. Introduce the book

Look at the cover and the blurb. Make predictions – What do you think this book is about? Have they read a book by the author before?

5. Take time to listen

Listen with your eyes as well as your ears – give them your full attention as they talk or read to you. Take it in turns to read parts of the story. Tell them one thing you really enjoy about listening to them read. This will encourage them to do it again.

6. Strike a balance

Praise them for the words they get right - it really works wonders. Making a mental note of any words that your child repeatedly struggles with and spending a few minutes at the start of every reading time trying them out. Maintain the flow - if your child mispronounces a word, do not interrupt them immediately, however tempting. Allow them the chance to self-correct using their phonics skills or by reading the word in the context of a sentence. You can return to any mispronounced words at the end of your reading time and discuss them then.

7. Enjoy reading anything, anywhere!

Remember, children need to experience a variety of reading materials e.g. picture books, hardbacks, comics, magazines, poems, recipes, instructions and information books. It doesn't always even have to be a book!

Every day there are lots of opportunities for you to encourage your child to get reading. Go online together and read or print off a web page that interests them. Carry a book or comic in your bag to share when you are out and about, on the bus, train, etc. Encourage them to read traffic signs, adverts, cereal packets, simple news headlines, DVD covers or film reviews.

8. Good communication is key

It may be that despite all attempts your child still struggles when it comes to reading. The earlier any problem is spotted the sooner something can be done about it. Talk to us about any concerns you have – we are here to help.

9. Think outside the book!

Never before have children had such access to a range of wonderful creative story and picture books, websites, applications, audio books and mobile devices. E-readers and interactive books are now adding further to the wealth of exciting opportunities for children to read. Join your local library. Not only do they provide access to a huge variety of free books, they also provide DVD's, audiobooks and even internet access. Make a simple book together with pictures they draw or photos they take and help them to write a story alongside it.

10. Have fun!

Read adventure or ghost stories in the dark or under the duvet by torchlight. Try reading the book in a funny accent or breaking up the character parts so you take it in turns to read. Encourage younger children to be 'story detectives', looking for clues in the pictures and text to help with challenging words.

8. A Parent's Guide to Accelerated Reader

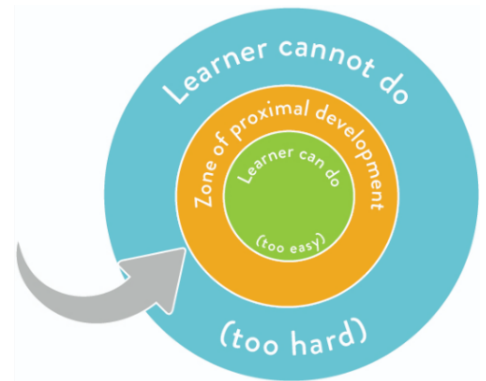
We use a program called Accelerated Reader (AR) to monitor children's independent reading.

What are STAR Reading Tests?

Every child will complete a **termly** STAR reading test on a computer. It takes a maximum of twenty-minutes and is multiple choice which the children find less daunting than a more formal test. Questions continually adjust to your child's responses, getting harder or easier accordingly.

What is a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)?

After your child takes a STAR reading test, they will be given a reading range called their Zone of Proximal Development or 'ZPD'. Your child is given a large selection of books to choose from that will provide challenge without causing frustration or loss of motivation. Afterwards, your child takes a short comprehension quiz on the computer.



What are the AR Quizzes?

When your child has finished reading their book, **they will take an online quiz independently** on the computer **in school**. Passing the quiz is an indication that your child has understood what they have read. All quizzes should be taken within 48 hours of finishing a book.

There are two main types of multiple-choice online quizzes your child will take:

- Reading Practice Quizzes
- Vocabulary Practice Quizzes.

Depending on the book level the quiz will take around 5-10 minutes to complete. The results are calculated and shown to the child instantly.

What do AR points mean?

We use each child's AR quiz scores to guide them to a selection of books pitched at an optimum level within their ZPD for them to make the best progress and to read with a high degree of comprehension. Your child will read books from across their ZPD and will move forwards and back through the range depending on the result of each comprehension quiz.

Research shows that children who score an average percentage correct of 75% and below on a series of AR quizzes actually have *decreased growth in reading progress* over the course of the school year. Children who score an average percentage correct of between **85% and 95%** have the *most growth in reading progress*, reflecting optimal comprehension levels. If children do not understand what they are reading, other factors such as the difficulty level of the reading material or time spent reading are of little consequence.

100% This book was comfortable for you. Try a book 1 or 2 levels higher up within your ZPD range. If you are at the top of your ZPD range already, see your teacher and they will set you another Star Reader test to generate a new ZPD.

90% This book was perfect for you. Try a book 1 level higher.

80% This book was a little difficult for you. Try a book of the same level or 1 level lower.

70% This book was challenging for you. Try a book 1 level lower.

60% This book was too challenging. Try a book 2 levels lower.

Below 60% You did not pass this quiz. Try a book towards the start of your ZPD level.

Staff will monitor children's average percentage correct and also use their discretion as to where a child should be reading within their range.

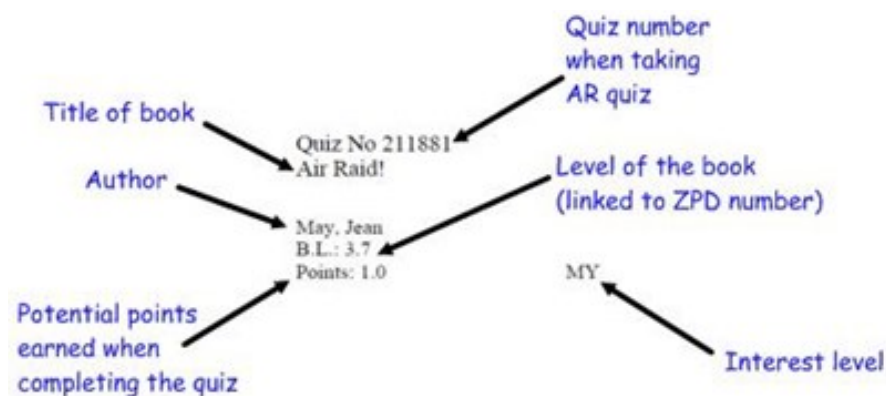
The importance of supported choice:

We are committed to building a life-long love of reading in all of our children. Reading for pleasure comes from being able to choose what you want to read rather than being assigned a specific book. This makes reading a much more enjoyable experience as children can choose books that are interesting to them. When children read **widely within their ZPD**, it gives them experience, choice, opportunity to read for pleasure and to develop stamina.

We help your child choose books that are challenging without being too easy or frustratingly hard, ensuring that your child can pass the next quiz and experience maximum success. We do this for all children, regardless of their reading competence.

What books will my child read?

Each reading book your child will bring home has a personalised label on the inside cover which shows important information. This is an example of a book label.



B.L. = book level. A child uses their ZPD range to decide which books are appropriate for them to read. A child with a ZPD range of 2.8 – 4.0 would be able to read 'Air Raid' (see the example label) and it will be slightly challenging for them as it is towards the top end of their ZPD range.

Points = points value based on the difficulty of the book and the number of words.

LY/MY/UY = Lower Years interest level (5-8 yrs old), **Middle years interest level** (9-13 yrs old), **Upper Years interest level** (14+ yrs old) Just because your child can read the words in a book does not mean the content is appropriate. The interest level of the material is also be considered.

Important to note:

- **AR is not a reading scheme and children are not required to work their way up through the book levels in order for them to make progress.**
- Instead, each child is set a **personalised reading range to read within (ZPD)**, determined by the results of their termly Star Reader test.
- It is important for children to stay within their ZPD to maintain a suitable level of challenge.
- The **whole range / ZPD is suitable for that child** – they do not need to be reading at the top of their assigned range.
- Your child's ZPD is adjusted at least once a term and more often if necessary.

- If your child does not pass a quiz, we do not ask them to re-read the book again or re-do the quiz as this could demotivate them.

How can I help my child become a better reader?

As with anything, performance improves with practice. At Emmbrook Junior School, we encourage children to read at home for at least 15 minutes, a minimum of five times a week. (This could be with an adult or independently). Your support in this is much appreciated.

Encourage your child to read their AR book at home as well as other books. Create a culture of reading in your household by reading with your child, starting a home library, visiting your local library or bookshop on a regular basis, letting your child see you reading and discussing books that each of you have read.

When reading with your child, stop and ask questions to be sure your child is comprehending what is read. A child may be able to decode and read the words but may not have understood it, so asking questions about the book is important. Reading with your child, no matter what the child's age, is an important part of developing a good reader and building a lifelong love of reading and learning.

How can I help my child find books that are interesting to him or her within their ZPD?

Sometimes, our children ask to take AR quizzes on books they have read at home too, not just their school books.

- You will find your child's most recent ZPD written in their Reading Record Book.
- Visit www.arbookfind.co.uk and click **Advanced Search**. By conducting an advanced search, you can generate book lists that contain titles based on the criteria you enter such as book level, topic, interest level, fiction/nonfiction, etc as well as find out if one of their home books has an associated quiz.