

# **AR Kids Read Volunteer Tutor Manual**







## AR Kids Read (AKR) Tutor Manual

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Dear AR Kids Read Volunteer,

Thank you for your interest in joining the AR Kids Read team! We are excited to work with you to improve the reading skills of central Arkansas children. We know your time is valuable, and we appreciate your commitment.

From first grade to third grade, students learn to read, and from fourth grade on, students read to learn. In central Arkansas, approximately 70% of 4th grade students cannot read at grade level. That makes things tough for these underperforming children, the schools and in the long-term, for our community. Studies have shown that 65% of 4th graders reading below grade level will drop out of school and will end up on welfare or in the prison system.

This is where you, the community volunteer, have a chance to make an impact in the lives of struggling readers. The role of the AKR tutor is to provide additional support to struggling readers by helping them experience joy in reading and thus become more confident readers. You will be working with first, second, or third grade students. We ask that you commit to a minimum of one hour per week for at least ten weeks. You will work with the same two students for thirty minutes each week. This manual will provide you with detailed information about your role as a volunteer reading tutor as well as provide you with resources to use during tutoring sessions. If you have questions or concerns at any point, please feel free to reach out to the AR Kids Read team.

Thank you again for your dedication to the struggling readers in Pulaski County.

Happy Reading!

The AR Kids Read Team



## Program Overview

### AKR Mission, Opportunity and Commitment

#### The Mission:

AR Kids Read seeks to improve the future of Arkansas children and families by advancing literacy education through community engagement and tutoring so that all children can read proficiently.

AR Kids Read is partnering with the four central Arkansas school districts: Jacksonville North Pulaski School District, Little Rock School District, North Little Rock School District, and Pulaski County Special School District, to recruit and support tutors.

#### The Opportunity:

- K-12 education is the #1 issue affecting the economic future of central Arkansas.
- Nearly 70% of third graders in central Arkansas are reading below grade level.
- 65% of fourth graders reading below grade level will drop out of high school, end up on welfare, or in the prison system.

A central Arkansas literacy study identified five key components of successful literacy tutoring that have been incorporated into the AR Kids Read program:

- Student relationship based
- Low tutor-to-student ratio
- Mentor commitment (for at least one semester)
- Reading level-based curriculum
- Effective program coordination, tutor training, and support

#### The Commitment:

Volunteers will work on reading comprehension with first, second or third grade students reading below grade level in a one-on-one setting.

**The time required is minimal—only 10 hours a semester (one hour/week for 10 weeks).**

Volunteers are asked to commit to a minimum of ten weeks of tutoring. There are two AKR tutoring sessions in a school calendar year:

**Fall Tutoring Session: October to mid-December**

**Spring Tutoring Session: January to mid-March**



## Volunteer Reading Tutor Job Description

The AKR tutor provides additional support to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade struggling readers by helping them experience joy in reading and thus become more confident readers. The AKR program model's foundation lies in the importance of the relationship between the tutor and the student. Tutors work with students who have been identified by their teachers as needing extra support. Students are selected based on test scores as well as other indicators, such as performance in the classroom.

The AKR tutor

- works one-on-one with two struggling readers for one hour per week (two children for thirty minutes each) for a minimum of ten weeks.
- reinforces regular classroom instruction by helping students to develop skills in:
  - reading comprehension,
  - Vocabulary, and
  - fluency.

AKR tutors do not need to have a background in education. They simply need to be able to read at an eleventh grade reading level, enjoy spending time with children, and be able to commit to one hour per week for ten weeks.

### **Getting Started: New Volunteer Tutor Checklist**

- Register at [www.arkidsread.org/volunteer](http://www.arkidsread.org/volunteer).
- During the registration process, select your school and preferred day and time.
- You will receive a confirmation email with information about registering for the required new tutor orientation and background check, as well as specifics about your school site (i.e. site coordinator's contact information, information about what to expect on your first day of tutoring, etc.).
- Attend the required new tutor orientation, if this is your first year tutoring.
- Complete the background check.
- On the first day of tutoring, your Site Coordinator will greet you at the front office, give you a folder of materials, introduce you to your students, and show you where you will be tutoring.
- Get to know your students and start READING!

### Volunteer Commitment

Tutors will sign up for the fall tutoring session in September. Tutors will receive an email about signing up for the spring tutoring session in November. Many tutors decide to tutor for both tutoring sessions. However, when you do end your tutoring commitment, make certain to tell your students that you will no longer be tutoring and set aside some time to summarize your sessions together and say goodbye. You will continue to tutor the same students for both sessions unless a student has to leave the program. Your Site Coordinator will let you know if you will be paired with a new



student. If you are meeting with a different student each tutoring session, please talk to your Site Coordinator or the AKR Regional Coordinator.

## **A Typical Tutoring Session**

### The Tutoring Environment:

Before each session, pick up the student from the classroom and go to your designated tutoring area. Each school has a different designated area, but some examples are an empty classroom, a corner of the media center or cafeteria, or a desk in the hallway. On the walk to your tutoring area, start a conversation with your student. Remember that even a simple conversation supports literacy development and taking the time to get to know your student also helps to build rapport.

### Setting the Tone:

From the very first session, it is important to make your student feel safe. Struggling readers have oftentimes lost confidence in their abilities, so it's crucial to build back up their confidence in order to improve their reading skills. If your student is scared or intimidated to read aloud during a session, you can read aloud to your student. Modeling fluency is an important part of the AR Kids Read tutoring sessions. See the **Activities** section for potential icebreakers and other tips for your tutoring sessions.

### Key Elements of a Tutoring Session:

During an AR Kids Read tutoring session, tutors are encouraged to focus on the following:

- Comprehension – an interaction between what is in the reader's mind and what is printed in the text.
- Fluency – the ability to read at a smooth and comfortable speed, with nearly perfect accuracy, and with appropriate expression, intonation, and phrasing.
- Vocabulary – the knowledge of words and word meanings.

### Checking In

Start the tutoring session by reviewing what you did in the previous session. Refer to your attendance log to remind yourself of the previous week's activities. Don't be surprised if your student reminds you to check the attendance log – most of them will LOVE to mark the week's attendance with their star sticker. Remind the student of a skill or word that he/she mastered in the previous week. Always remember to encourage and praise your student!

### Reading

Encourage your student to pick out the book. Students are more engaged if they are able to choose the reading material. Oftentimes, students will bring several books from their familiar reading boxes. If they haven't read the text yet, ask them to take a look at the cover and the title and make predictions about the story or text. If they've already read the book, ask them to tell you about the story in their own words.



### Discussing and Writing

Talk to your student about the story. Ask questions about the setting, plot, and characters. Also, relate the story to the student's life. Ask the student if the story reminds him/her of anything in his/her own life. Use the graphic organizers and dry erase boards (if available) to practice writing. Unlined dry erase boards are a great tool for students who are learning to write because their fine motor skills are still developing and staying between the lines can be difficult. See the **Activities** section for potential writing exercises.

### High-Frequency Words / Sight Words

High-frequency words or sight words are the most commonly used words in printed text and over 50% of all text is composed of them. Because many are phonetically irregular and tend to be abstract, students must memorize them to read quickly and fluently. See the **Activities** section for high-frequency word games and activities. Your tutoring folder may come with the appropriate set of high-frequency cards for your students; if not, ask your Site Coordinator if they can provide you with some.

### Tutoring Tips and Strategies

#### Comprehension Strategies

Without understanding, text is meaningless. Here are a few strategies to ensure that the students are understanding what they are reading.

**Predicting, inferring, questioning:** stop the student periodically and ask questions about the story. For example, "Why do you think the character is feeling this way?" or "What do you think will happen next?"

**Summarizing or retelling:** at the end of the session, ask the student to tell you the story in his/her own words.

**Rereading for closer analysis:** ask the student to reread a sentence or section and have a conversation about what is happening in the text.

**Using text structure:** show the student how authors use signal words (*first, next, last, now, then, after, finally, when, following, etc.*) to help the reader understand how events are sequenced in a text.

#### Fluency Strategies

Four Things to Keep in Mind:

1. Reading fast does not guarantee better comprehension.
2. Reading slowly, but accurately, does not guarantee better comprehension.
3. Reading monotone, without accurate intonation, does not guarantee better comprehension.
4. In general, fluency is the result of lots and lots of practice and wide reading.





*Paired Reading* is a great way to help readers become more fluent.

There are two options for paired reading:

1. The tutor and student read orally together from a selected text, 3-5 times or until the student feels confident to read alone. When the student reads alone, the tutor should follow silently along, offering pronunciation assistance if needed. If the student begins to struggle too much, the tutor should resume reading orally with the student.
2. The tutor reads the text orally while the student follows along silently. Then, the student reads the text, while the tutor follows along silently, providing pronunciation assistance if needed.

Also, simply reading aloud to your student is a great way to help your student become more fluent.

*Vocabulary Strategies:*

1. **Look for context clues** in the words, phrases, and sentences surrounding the unfamiliar word.
2. **Look for word-part clues** within the unfamiliar word.
  - A. Try to break the word into parts. (If you can't, skip to step 3)
  - B. Look at the root word. What does it mean?
  - C. Look at the prefix. What does it mean?
  - D. Look at the suffix. What does it mean?
  - E. Put the meanings of the word parts together. What is the meaning of the whole word?
3. **Guess the word's meaning.** (Use steps 1 and 2)
4. **Try out your meaning in the original sentence** to check whether or not it makes sense in context.
5. **Discuss the word's meaning with the student** to confirm your meaning (or use a dictionary).

*Tips for a Tutoring Session: The 5 Ps*

As you are tutoring, remember the 5 Ps. The 5 Ps are **P**repare, **P**ause, **P**rompt, **P**raise, and **P**robe.

*Prepare*

Always remember to take time to prepare the student for the session. Remember, when you are introducing a new book, prepare the student for the new book. Oftentimes, the students will bring several books from their familiar reading boxes. If they haven't read the text yet, ask them to take a look at the cover and the title and ask the student to predict who or what the story may be about.

Do a picture walk – look through the book and make predictions about the story without reading any of the text.



Look for new vocabulary words. As you flip through the pages, point out words that may be difficult for the child or may be new vocabulary words.

When you are rereading a familiar text, prepare the student for the text by asking questions about the text and reminding the student about what he/she has already read. Preparing the child for a book helps the child begin the thinking/predicting process.

### *Pause*

In order to help each child become a successful reader, we must foster independence. One very powerful way to do this is to give the child an opportunity to think about how he/she can “unlock” a difficult word. When we pause or give wait time, we let the child know that we believe that he/she can do it. When you immediately tell the child the word, it sends the message that he/she cannot do this without your help. It is important to create a space where the child feels safe enough to take risks.

When the child stops or hesitates while reading, wait five seconds before offering help.

### *Prompt*

After you have given the child enough time to think, prompt the student.

### ***Does that make sense?***

Ask the student to reread the sentence and ask if it makes sense. Encourage them to use the context clues as well as the pictures to help them determine whether or not it makes sense.

Example: Child reads: The horse has four bedrooms.  
Text reads: The house has four bedrooms.

Ask the student if this makes sense. Does a horse have four bedrooms? What would make sense here?

### ***Does it look right?***

Example: Child reads: He jumped over the flower pot.  
Text reads: He jumped over the gate.

You might say, “That was a good try. He could jump over a flower pot, but does the word look like flower? What would you expect to see at the beginning of the word flower?”

### ***Does that sound right?***

Example: Child reads: The goat eated four shoes.  
Text reads: The goat ate four shoes.

You might say, “Do we say, ‘the goat eated?’ Does that sound right? What would sound better?”



## *Praise*

It is important to praise your student during the session. It encourages the child to continue to improve his/her reading skills. The best praise is specific praise. Rather than simply saying "Great Job," tell your student why you're pleased.

### *Praises for Correct Reading*

"I like the way you went back to the beginning of the sentence and reread it."

"You sounded just like you were talking when you read that part."

### *Praises for Incorrect Reading:*

"That was a good try. It does begin like that, but..."

"Good. You nearly worked it out by yourself."

### *Praises for Self-Correction*

"Good work. You corrected your mistake."

"Excellent! You realized that what you read didn't make sense, and you corrected it."

## *Probe*

Always remember to ask the student questions before, during, and after the reading. Students may be able to read all of the words, but they may not comprehend what they are reading.

Before reading: Use clues such as the title and pictures to ask the student questions about the story.

During reading: Encourage the student to predict what will happen next in the story.

After reading: Ask the student to retell the story in their own words. Ask the student questions about the main characters, the setting, and the plot of the story. Use the graphic organizers when appropriate.

## **What to Expect at Your School**

### Site Coordinator

The Site Coordinator is your onsite contact at your school. On your first day, the Site Coordinator will meet you at the front office and show you how to sign in, let you know where the adult bathrooms are, introduce you to the front office staff, and provide you with your tutoring folder as well as a school calendar and schedules. The Site Coordinator will also introduce you to your students and your teacher(s) on your first day.



## Teacher

Teachers are often in the middle of classroom instruction when you go to the classroom to pull out your students. However, they are interested in learning about their students' progress during your tutoring session. Use the Teacher to Tutor Communication Letter to give your teacher up-to-date information about your students' progress. Some teachers may prefer to share information via email and will share their contact information with you. Teachers are very busy and it might take some time to get to know them. If you are having trouble communicating with your teacher, talk to your Site Coordinator or the AKR Regional Coordinator.

## AKR Regional Coordinator

The AKR Regional Coordinator is your AKR main contact. The Regional Coordinator will be at your school at least once a month and will provide support to the Site Coordinator. The Regional Coordinator will be in regular communication with tutors via email. Always feel free to reach out to the Regional Coordinator with any questions or concerns.

## Signing In at the Front Office

Always sign in at the front office and get a visitor's badge before going to the classroom. You will also be provided with an AKR nametag and lanyard to wear while you are at the school.

## The Tutoring Space

The Site Coordinator will let you know where you will be tutoring. You may be tutoring in the media center, the cafeteria, an empty classroom, or in the hallway. If you are tutoring in an empty classroom, be certain that you leave the classroom door open to ensure the safety of all involved. If you are tutoring in an empty classroom, your tutoring materials may be housed in the classroom. Your Site Coordinator will let you know where the materials will be housed. If you need extra materials, such as paper, extra pencils, dry erase boards, or additional books, please ask the Site Coordinator or the Regional Coordinator.

- Tutoring Folders will include:
  - AKR manual
  - AR Kids Read Attendance Logs
  - Stickers
  - AKR nametag and lanyard
  - Graphic organizers
  - Pencils



## FAQs

### What should I do if I can't make a tutoring session?

When you can't attend a tutoring session and you know at least a week in advance, contact the teacher or the Site Coordinator. Also, let your student know that you will be absent. If you can't attend a session at the last minute, call the front office and ask them to let your teacher know that you will not be able to attend. If it works with your schedule, talk to the Site Coordinator or teacher about rescheduling the session at a different time during the week.

### What should I do if my student is absent?

There will be days when at least one of your students is absent. If only one of your students is absent, you can ask your teacher if you could do a longer session with your other student. Many students who need extra support are often absent on a fairly regular basis. However, if your students are chronically absent, talk to your Site Coordinator or the AKR Regional Coordinator about pairing you with a different student. We want to honor your time as a volunteer and want to be certain that your time is well-spent.

### What should I do if my student is misbehaving or won't listen to me?

You are not responsible for disciplining your students. If the student simply won't listen to you or is easily distracted, try breaking up the session with a game or switch to a different book. If your student is misbehaving and refuses to listen to you, take him/her back to the classroom and explain the situation to the teacher.

### What should I do if I am concerned about my student's safety?

When you meet regularly with the same students, they will likely open up to you and share stories and information about their lives with you. Keep in mind that some of the information may not be true. However, it is important for you to listen to your students and if you are concerned about their safety, please speak to your student's teacher, counselor, or principal. They are familiar with their students' families. They are trained as mandatory reporters of child abuse/neglect and are prepared to follow proper protocol.

### What should I do if I cannot find a place to tutor?

In some schools, space is an issue. On your first day of tutoring, the Site Coordinator will show you where you will be tutoring. However, you may show up one day to discover that there is a special activity taking place in your designated tutoring location. Talk to your Site Coordinator or teacher to see if there is an alternate location for you to tutor. The media center or cafeteria are oftentimes good alternate locations. Please remember, volunteers are required to tutor in public locations in order to maintain safety for everyone involved.



### Is it okay to give my students gifts?

Each of the school districts has a different gift giving policy, so please ask your Site Coordinator before giving gifts to your students. The AKR team will provide you with books to give to your students during each semester.

## **Tutoring Session Activities**

### First Tutoring Session Tips

It is common for the tutor and the student to feel nervous during the first tutoring session. Start the session by letting your student know that you will be coming to the school once a week to read with them. The first session will primarily be a “getting to know you” session. Spend time asking your student open-ended questions. Share your own interests as well. Ask them what their favorite book is. Some students will be eager to open up and talk to you while others will be more reserved and quiet. If a student seems overwhelmed by a lot of questions, try one of the icebreaker activities listed below.

#### *Create an acrostic name poem*

Write your names vertically on a sheet of paper. Create words or phrases that describe your interests or personality that start with the letters of your name. Discuss the poems to learn more about each other. For example, Amanda could write the following poem:

**A**ctive

**M**y favorite color is green.

**A**llergic to peanuts

**N**ice

**D**etermined

**A**mazing

#### *Draw a picture of your favorite character*

Have your student draw a picture of his/her favorite character from a book, movie, or TV show. You can also draw a picture of your favorite character. Talk about your favorite characters. Describe the characters’ adventures.

### Writing Exercises

#### *Graphic Organizers*

Graphic organizers are worksheets that help students make sense of the story. Some graphic organizers contain prompts for students to identify the setting, plot, and characters in a story. The graphic organizers are a great opportunity for the students to practice comprehension strategies as well as practice their writing skills.



### Language Experience Approach

Have the students tell you a story in their own words. It could be about their favorite TV show, a recent experience, or a made up story. Write down the story verbatim. For example, if they say “don’t” when they should say “didn’t” don’t correct them. Then, have the student read their words. You will be amazed by how easily they can read their own words. This shows students that words on paper are really just “talk written down.”

### Written Dialogue

In this activity, you and your student have a conversation through writing.

1. Write a question about the story or topic. Be sure to use words and concepts the students can read and understand.
2. The child reads the question and writes a response or answer.
3. Read the student’s response and write a comment about what the child wrote. Remember to praise the child for their efforts.

### High-Frequency Word Games

There are many different ways to practice high-frequency words with your students. Here are a few suggestions. Be creative and keep in mind that your students will often have a short attention span, so playing a short game can help keep a student engaged.

- Line up several word cards on the desk. Say one of the words then have the student point to the word and remove it from the desk. Repeat with a different word.
- Place several word cards on the desk and challenge the student to use as many words as possible in a sentence. Have the student take the cards as the words are used in the sentence.
- Have the student arrange the word cards in alphabetical order and then read all of the words.
- Place the cards face down on the desk and have the student flip over the cards and read them as quickly as he/she can. If the student reads the word correctly, place the card in the student’s pile and if the student reads it incorrectly, place the card in the tutor’s pile. Reread the cards in the tutor’s pile.

### **Tips for Reading with a Child**

**Be patient:** Remember that your students are working hard to learn a new skill. Read the student’s cues. If the student seems frustrated or overwhelmed, read aloud to the student or have a conversation about the story rather than pushing them to continue reading.

**Be positive:** Remember to praise your student. See the *5 Ps* section for specific suggestions for praising students.

**Have fun!** Use silly voices when you read aloud. Act out part of the story. Be creative!



## References

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[www.ReadingRockets.com](http://www.ReadingRockets.com)

[www.literacyconnections.com](http://www.literacyconnections.com)

[www.reading-tutors.com](http://www.reading-tutors.com)





## Teacher to Tutor Communication Letter

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for your work with \_\_\_\_\_.

He/she could use extra help in the following areas (check applicable).

- Reading grade level material fluently
- Increasing vocabulary
- Comprehending the reading material
- Mastering high frequency words
- Writing

He/she is showing progress in the following areas (check applicable).

- Reading grade level material fluently
- Increasing vocabulary
- Comprehending the reading material
- Mastering high frequency words
- Writing

Comments:

## Tutor to Teacher Feedback

Comments:



## **Tutor to Teacher Communication Letter**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I have been enjoying working with \_\_\_\_\_ (first name only).

It seems like he / she is bringing books to the session that are too (circle one):

difficult

easy.

I am struggling to engage \_\_\_\_\_. He / she doesn't seem interested in reading. Do you have any suggestions for me?

Comments:

## **Teacher to Tutor Feedback**

Comments:

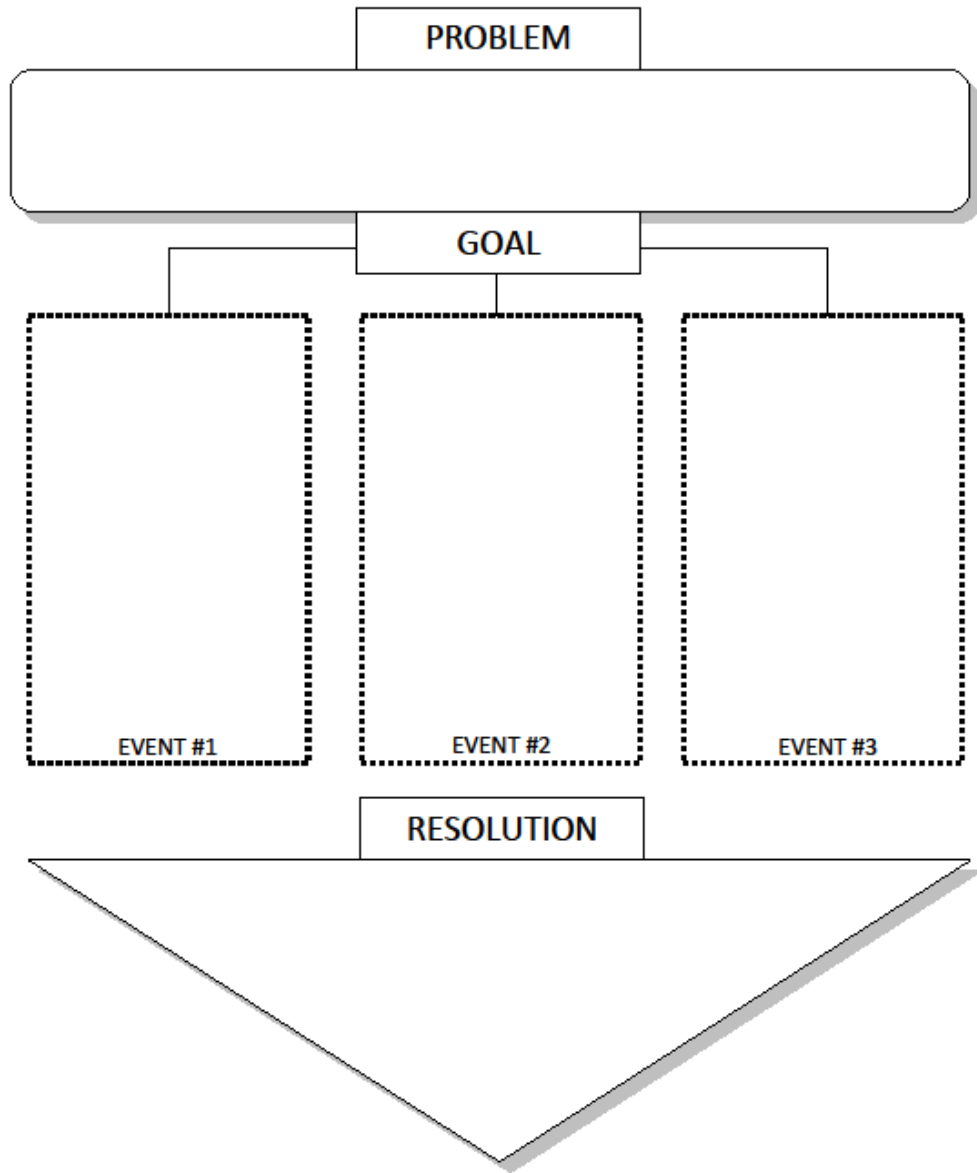


Many tutors have questions about book levels. Oftentimes, the books provided by the school will have a Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) or Guided Reading Level listed on the front cover. This chart shows the DRA Levels and Guided Reading Levels by beginning, middle, and end of the year for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders.

Grade Level	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade Levels							2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade Levels				3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade Levels		
	Beginning		Middle			End		Beg	Mid		End	Beg	Mid	End
<b>DRA Level</b>	3 & 4	5&6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	24	28	30	34	38
<b>Guided Reading Level</b>	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P

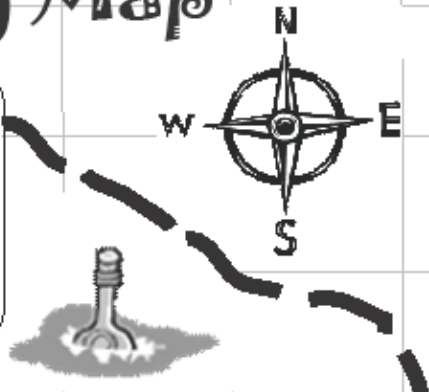
## Problem and Solution Diagram

Book title: \_\_\_\_\_



# Story Map

Setting



Characters



Problem



Solution




# AR Kids Read Attendance Log

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tutor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Tutoring semester (i.e., Spring 2017, Fall 2018, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Tutors: Write the date of each tutoring session. Have the students place a sticker in the attendance column at the end of each tutoring session.

Date		Book(s) Read/ Author's Name	Book Level	Comments