

SQ4R Reading System

“I CAN’T REMEMBER WHAT I READ!”

The SQ4R reading system is designed to help you study your textbook and apply reading and note-taking skills. The letters in SQ3R stand for five steps: survey, question, read, reflect, recite, and review. These steps will help you gain more from what you read and be better prepared for quizzes and exams. In other words, you will maximize the return on your time investment for reading!



Yes, it takes more time than just reading the words, but have you noticed that just reading the words in your text is a waste of your valuable time. Consider the SQ3R system as an efficient way to read, study, and create a study guide all in one system! Students who use this system report how much time they actually save because they are studying for the exam as they read!

S = SURVEY

- Read the title of the chapter or the article. Turn these into questions that you expect to be answered. Add question words as why, who, how or what.
- Read the headings and subheadings and turn these into questions.
- Read the introduction and summary to get an overview of the main ideas.
- Read the captions under the visual aids.
- Read any study questions at the end of the chapter or article and use them as goals in your reading.

Q = QUESTION (Question as you survey)

- As you read each of the above parts, ask yourself what is meant by the title, headings, subheadings, and captions. Make good questions about each. Write these down on 3x5 cards or study guide.
- Ask yourself what you already know about the subject?
- Ask yourself what your instructor said about the assignment in the class or what was given out on a handout?
- Ask yourself what you want answered from reading the assignment?
- Ask yourself what you will have to do with the information?

R = READ

- Read and think actively.
- Look for main ideas and supporting details. Use outlining, underlining, and test marking skills.
- Read to answer questions that were raised in the QUESTION step.
- Read carefully all of the underlined, *italicized*, **boldfaced** words or phrases.

R = REFLECT

- Use Critical Thinking Skills
- How does this fit with information you already know? How can you use this information in your life? Your career? Your family? Your schooling?
- How would you teach this to someone else?

R = RECITE (Recite immediately after reading an assignment)

- Use good judgment about places to stop and recite.
- Use outlining and underlining skills. (Do not underline long passages. Mark after you have read a passage AND understand it.)
- Write your own summary statement of each section.
- Quiz yourself on the main points.
- Connect new material with what you already know about the subject.
- Write questions on any material you do not understand and ask your instructor to explain it.
- Write the answers to the questions from the QUESTION step.



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R = REVIEW (daily, weekly, and before a test)

- Look over your outlines, underline, and any notations you made in your textbook.
- Study briefly the main ideas to keep the information fresh in your mind.
- Make practice test questions from review notes.

Feel free to customize this system to meet your own needs and the needs of a particular class or text. The SQ3R system works particularly well for courses where much of the information for quizzes and exams comes from the text, and you must know and understand a lot of detail.

Try it for two weeks and see if it doesn't improve your reading comprehension and even your enjoyment of a course!