

SQ3R: Effective Reading

Step 1: Survey

Why: Surveying helps you get a bird's eye view of your reading, so you can see its basic structure and important concepts.

When: Before you start reading. Surveying helps you contextualize as you read.

How: Quickly check out the:

- Title, author, and any headings to subsections;
- Images, graphs, etc. and the captions accompanying them;
- Any review questions or practice quizzes;
- The introduction and conclusion (these may be more than one paragraph).

Step 2: Question

Why: Collecting questions you develop as you survey the reading will help you focus your reading on understanding the critical gaps in your knowledge.

When: As you survey, jot down any questions about the content that occur to you.

How:

- Look for things you don't understand in the title and headings to any subsections;
- Make note of any provided questions within the reading that you don't know the answer to;
- Ask yourself what you already know about the subject that the reading focuses on.

Step 3: Read

Why: To fill in the gaps between what you know and what you need to know.

When: After you have surveyed and questioned, but before lecture.

How:

- Try to answer the questions you came up with or were provided with;
- Pay attention to words or phrases that are underlined, italicized, or bolded;
- Slow down when you encounter difficult passages. Reread them if necessary.

Step 4: Recite

Why: To crystalize and solidify what you have learned.

When: After you've completed the reading.

How:

- Ask yourself out loud the questions you developed;
- Summarize the reading in a few sentences;
- Underline or highlight key points.

Step 5: Review

Why: To make sure your understanding of the material sticks.

When: Daily or as frequently as possible.

How:

Day One

- Take a sheet of paper and draw a line down the middle. Put the questions on one side of the page, write the answers on the other.

Day Two

- Do another survey of the reading to remind yourself of the key points.
- Go back to your sheet from day one. Cover your answers and ask yourself the questions again.
- Make note of material you are having trouble remembering. Create flash cards or mnemonic devices to help you recall them.

Days Three, Four and Five

- Switch between using your flash cards and your sheet from day one to review the material.

Weekend

- Using the reading and your notes about it, make a Table of Contents, or a list all the topics and sub-topics you need to know.
- From that Table of Contents, make a study sheet or concept map.
- Try to say the main ideas and concepts out loud and in your own words as you create the study sheet or map.
- Keep reviewing your study sheet or map until you are assessed on the material.

Based on: Robinson, Francis Pleasant. (1970) *Effective study*. New York: Harper & Row.

Additional information can be accessed on:

<http://studygs.net/texred2.htm>