

**What is SQ3R?** SQ3R is a step-by-step method that helps you to remember and understand more while reading a textbook. Textbooks and technical materials focus more on presenting information than telling a story (as in a novel). Because you are looking for specific information while reading, it is important that you have a tool to help you find and remember the important information that you will read.

**SQ3R method is comprised of five steps:**

- **Survey**—preview a chapter or section and develop a reading plan.
- **Question**—ask questions about the material, your readiness and background knowledge of the chapter.
- **Read**—examine, determine and distinguish the meaning of the passage.
- **Recite**—say aloud or write what you understood from the reading.
- **Review**—remember or recite at a later time what was learned.

**When do I use SQ3R?** SQ3R offers strategies for each phase of the reading process.

Reading Process:

- *Before Reading:* Survey and Question.
- *During Reading:* Read (and annotate)
- *After Reading:* Recite and Review

## Breakdown of SQ3R

### SURVEY

Skim the text before reading. This survey of the material gives you an idea of what the author considers most important. Once you have surveyed the chapter, you will have a mental framework of the reading assignment. Not only will you better understand what you're reading, but you will improve your concentration, motivation, and interest.

When surveying a chapter, figure out what sections to focus more time on and what sections can be read through quickly. Make sure to look for general themes and specific ideas. Textbooks may seem difficult to read, but their structure makes it easier to find what you are looking for.

**Here is a general list of items to survey in each passage or chapter:**

Item	Purpose
<i>Titles</i>	Give an idea of what the whole chapter is about.
<i>Introduction</i>	Gives the important points of the chapter.
<i>Heading, Subheadings</i>	Give an idea of what the particular section is about.
<i>Special Words</i> <i>(<b>Bold</b>, <i>Italic</i> or <u>underlined</u>)</i>	These are keywords, main ideas or other helpful information.
<i>Graphics (Picture, Charts, Graphs, Diagrams)</i>	Give visual information of what the chapter is about.
<i>Questions at the end of the chapter</i>	Give ideas of questions to ask about the reading.

## QUESTION

After you survey a section, create questions about what you see. This process of developing questions makes you actively engage with the text, and active reading helps understanding. Developing questions also gives you a purpose for reading. Your purpose is to find the answers to these questions. **Note:** If it is helpful to you, write out these questions for consideration. This variation is called SQW3R

**To get the most out of your reading, you should ask questions *before, during, and after* you read a passage.**

- Ask questions about **yourself**
- Ask questions about the **material**

### Questions to ask yourself:

- Before Reading: What do I already know about this topic? Am I mentally ready to read? What did my instructor say about this chapter or subject when it was assigned?
- During Reading: Do I have a clear idea of what this chapter is about? What will I do with what I am learning? What did my instructor say about this chapter or subject when it was assigned?
- After Reading: Do I understand what I just read? Do I need to read the passage again?

### Questions to ask about the material:

- **Change titles and headings into questions using *who, what, when, where, why, and how*, as well as so *what* and *who cares*.**
  - EX: Change the heading "The War of 1812" to "Why was the War of 1812 so important?"
- **Turn the topic sentences and main ideas of paragraphs into questions.**
- **Ask questions to find the main idea:**
  - EX: "What is the author trying to tell me about the topic? What is the author's main point?"
- **Ask questions to show development.**
  - EX: "How does this new idea fit or relate to what I read a few pages ago?"
- **Ask questions about vocabulary lists and questions at the end of the chapter.**
  - EX: An end-of-chapter question asks: "Think of an organizational change that you have resisted at some time. Why did you resist?" You might create the question: "*Have* I experienced an organizational change? Was Dan's promotion to shift manager an organizational change?"
  - A vocabulary list may suggest questions: "Do *unfreezing* and *refreezing* have to do with computer programs?"

Some of your questions will turn out to be good ones. Some will turn out to have missed the point. Some will be answered within the text and some won't. It doesn't matter because even stray questions activate your thinking.

## READ

### ***How much should I read at one time?***

It's important to read a textbook one step at a time. *Chunking* is the process of breaking down your reading into smaller parts. Make sure you understand what the paragraph or section is about before going to the next one. Finally, annotate (i.e., underline or mark the main ideas and supporting details) before moving on to the next paragraph or sections.

### ***How much should I annotate and highlight?***

- As you read a sentence try underlining or highlighting just a few words that make up the main idea of that sentence. Do the same with paragraphs.
- Make annotations or comments about the text in the margin.
- If you cannot write in your textbook, consider taking notes about what you learn either using mind maps or other note taking strategies.
- Look for key information by asking questions. If you are actively reading by asking questions and answering them from the text, you will understand more than if you passively read the words and hope you will somehow remember them.

### **RECITE**

In reading a textbook you have to decide what things are the most important and then find ways to make that information stick. Reciting involves stating or writing *in your own words* the main ideas of the chapter and organizing them in ways that you can remember. This involves more than just highlighting or underlining. You should also recite after each chunk of text that you read.

Here are a few ways to recite what you read in a textbook passage:

- *Summarize*- writing or speaking
- *Outlining*- note taking in the order that you read
- *Mapping*- linking main concepts to supporting details
- *Paraphrasing*—say a key concept or definition in your own words
- *Questioning*- write questions about anything you still don't understand and ask someone
- Answer the questions that you asked during the survey or read steps

### **REVIEW**

After reciting you need to review what you learned to help you remember and retain the information. By the time you get to this step you should have read the whole chapter or section that you set out to read. In reviewing, you will look over your notes of the chapter or skim through the chapter again. Remember that you will remember more by reviewing what you have learned the night before the test instead of cramming the night before. Here are some ways to organize or reduce the important information into ways that will help you study and remember them.

- Simplify or expand your notes
- Organizer your notes right after reading to make sure you understood correctly what you learned
- Make flowcharts, flashcards, time lines, or things to rehearse and practice what you learned
- Review what you learned every day, every week, and before the test. Don't just expect to remember what you read a week ago, without reviewing it before the test.
- Make sample test questions to study.
- Recite or write from memory the important points.
- Continue to reduce your notes to a manageable size.

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**Further explanation and activities for using SQ3R can be found in the following text:**

Flemming, Loraine. *Reading for Results*, 12<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Wadsworth, 2014. (See pages 2-28)