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## Read Textbooks Strategically with the SQ4R Method

The SQ4R reading strategy is six simple steps that can help you absorb information from a textbook. Before looking at the method itself, there are a couple of things that you should do:

### Make Sure You Are Able to Concentrate.

- Read and study in the same place. Your brain relies on making connections. When you read and study in the same physical space, your brain builds relationships between the information you are absorbing and the space you are in. It can become part of a healthy routine that helps with motivation, concentration, and retention.
- Minimize distractions, noises, and sights which may interfere with concentration.
- Set time limits.
- Read and study in short bursts (we recommend a minimum of 15 minutes to a maximum of 50 minutes).
- Take regular breaks between study periods (we recommend 3 minutes to 15 minutes)
- Study according to your biological clock.

### Get Acquainted With Your Textbook.

- Before you begin to read a textbook for the first time, glance over the following:
  - The **introduction** and/or preface and/or forward
    - This informs you of the author's purpose, their biases, how the author wants you to use the book, and how the book is organized.
  - The **table of contents**
    - This gives you an idea of the topics covered in the text and shows you how the material is organized.
  - The **chapters**
    - You can see how the chapters are arranged. Are there learning objectives at the start of each chapter? Are there subheadings? Words in bold print that you need to know? Is there a summary of each chapter's main points?
  - The **glossary**
    - This list gives you an idea of the number of new terms, and provides a handy reference if you need to look up a word.

## The Six Steps of SQ4R

### 1. Survey.

The first step is to survey the chapter.

- read the introduction and learning objectives
- look over the headings and subheadings
- if there are no headings, read the first sentence of each paragraph
- read the chapter summary and/or the chapter questions
- look at any pictures, charts, or graphs that catch your attention

**NOTE:** Question, Read, Rewrite, and sometimes Record, are repeated for each section within a chapter.

### 2. Question.

Using the title of the section you are reading, ask a question you would like answered. Turning headings into questions focuses your attention, provides you with a purpose for reading, and encourages you to read actively. Sort and evaluate ideas to determine if they answer your questions.

### 3. Read.

Having turned the heading into a question, now read the section in search of the answers. Read to determine the main points and details that answer your questions, highlighting or underlining the points as you go. This process helps you to understand and evaluate what you have read. Adjust your reading speed to the material.

### 4. Recite.

Having read the passage, take a moment to paraphrase or summarize the information. Ask yourself, "What were the most important points in this section?" If you are not sure what those important points were, use the section headings, keywords, or chapter titles as clues.

### 5. Record.

Paraphrasing information will help your retention and understanding of the material. Take notes in a separate book or directly annotate the text.

### 6. Review.

At minimum, review the chapter or your notes within 24 hours, then again within a week, and finally just before an exam. Look back over headings in the chapter or in your notes, and see whether you can remember the main ideas and summarize material that goes with them.