THE SQ5R STUDY-READING METHOD*
A Systematic Way to Master Your Textbook

The SQ5R Study-Reading Method is adapted from a technique based on sound learning principles and tested through successful use by thousands of students. Although you may find it necessary to change some steps to meet your needs, the method will work for you in any subject, and it can be applied to units larger or smaller than a textbook chapter.

Survey
5 minutes
- skim-read the whole chapter in order to
  (a) overcome inertia and get down work,
  (b) get an overview of content and structure
- read the title, heading, first sentences of paragraphs, and summary
- look for theory, terms and definitions, and facts (the content) and for chronology, cause and effect relationships, and organization (structure)

Question
- make up questions from the headings
- try to limit yourself to 3-5 “most important questions” that you will answer by the end of the chapter
- You will:
  (a) spontaneously try to answer questions from what you already know,
  (b) be frustrated until the questions are answered, and
  (c) be curious about the subject and therefore more interested in learning it.

Read
- read actively from the beginning, attempting to answer questions
- selectively evaluate ideas as you go, concentrating only on those that are important to answer the questions you’ve formed
- decide to “learn it now”; don’t expect to be able to “go over it again later”
- read a section at a time using this and the following steps

Record
- after reading a section, take notes, underline, or highlight; you will have a better idea of what’s important by then
- find the best statement of each idea or concept to underline or write in your own words so you’ll remember

Recite
- close the book and try to remember the answer to your questions, concentrating on the three to five main “things you will know”
- check your answers and re-study as necessary
- have someone quiz you periodically or give yourself tests

Reflect or Relate
- think about the material you’ve learned in relation to what you already know -- in this or some other subject
- critically examine the ideas presented to test their validity

Review
- regularly go back over the material (try using steps 1, 5, and others as necessary) to keep it fresh in your mind
- even a few minutes of cumulative review per subject per week can make a tremendous difference in retention

*adapted from Walter Pauk, How to Study in College, Houghton Mifflin, 1974
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The SQ3R Study-Reading Method is adapted from a technique based on sound learning principles and tested through successful use by thousands of students. Although you may find it necessary to change some steps to meet your needs, the method will work for you in any subject, and it can be applied to units larger or smaller than a textbook chapter. Use this Study Guide to organize your notes on SQ3R and ask questions.

1. S

2. Q

3. R

4. R

5. R

6. R or R

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