WHAT IS S-Q-3-R?


SQ3R is a useful five-step approach for reading college textbooks, developed by Francis P. Robinson in 1941. Since then, others have developed variations of SQ3R but they all have the same objective: to show you how to do more than just read and help you learn effectively and remember what you read.

“S” stands for “Survey.” This is familiarizing yourself with the chapter before you begin to read. Surveying helps you mentally process the information you are about to receive.

“Q” means “Question,” that is, developing questions before you read, so you will look for specific information while you read. Generating questions can increase your concentration and reduce forgetting.

The first “R” stands for “Read.” It might surprise you that reading is the third step, not the first. A common mistake some students make is to simply read. They don’t prepare to read, yet when they finish they hope that they’ll remember what they read. Preparing to read can help you read more actively, which can increase your long-term retention.

The next “R” stands for “Recite.” This is the first of two post-reading steps; both are designed to help you retain what you just read. “Recite” suggests orally answering the questions you wrote in Step 2. Recite a summary, ask yourself questions, and then see if you can answer them. Get together with a study partner and quiz one another or discuss the material. The more of your senses you use, the better you’ll remember what you read. Reciting information helps move material from your short-term memory to your long-term memory.

The last “R” is “Review.” Instead of waiting until before an exam, review as soon as you finish reading. Immediate review decreases forgetting and can result in better retention.

Try the SQ3R method with one of your college textbooks. It can be an effective reading strategy because it promotes mastery and retention of what you read.

Survey

1. Read the title.
2. Read all headings and subheadings.
3. Read all captions under pictures, charts, graphs, or maps.
4. Read any questions at the beginning of the chapter and those at the end.
5. Find any words in **boldface** and *italics*.
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Question

1. Turn the title into a question.
2. Turn any headings and subheadings into questions.
3. Turn any boldface or italicized words into questions.
4. Ask yourself, "What did my instructor say about this chapter when it was assigned?"
5. Ask yourself, "What do I already know about this subject?"

Read

1. Actively read to find out more information and answer your questions and any assigned by your professor or included by the author.
2. Reread all captions under pictures, graphs, tables, and other visuals.
3. Study any graphic aids.
4. Reduce your reading speed for difficult passages.
5. Pause and reread passages which are unclear.

Recite

1. At the end of each section, stop and silently or orally answer original questions.
2. For long-term understanding, recite aloud.
3. Use your own words.
4. Write answers to the questions that you came up with when surveying and questioning.
5. Quiz yourself immediately on what you just studied.

Review

1. If you can't recite the main ideas/details of a section, reread it.
2. Relate one section of the reading assignment to another to develop a whole picture.
3. Write a summary, including main ideas.
4. Make a study guide/sheet (don't forget to check your questions). Then make a review schedule. Review again after 24 hours, 72 hours, and twice more within the week. (This eliminates having to cram for a test.)