

# THE SQ3R METHOD OF STUDYING A TEXTBOOK

This is probably the first (1941) truly systematic method devised for studying a textbook. It earned popularity not only because of its sound academic principles, but also because its name makes it easy to remember. This method is the product of a well known psychologist from Ohio State University, Francis P. Robinson. Almost all textbook systems by other authors were either partially taken from this work or inspired by it.

**SURVEY** **Glance over** the headings in the chapter to see the main points that will be developed. Also read the final summary paragraph if the chapter has one. This survey should not take more than a minute and will show the core ideas around which the discussion will centre. This orientation will help you organise the ideas as you read them later.

**QUESTION** Now begin to work. Turn the first heading into a **question**. This will arouse your curiosity and thereby increase comprehension. It will bring to mind information already known, thus helping you understand that section more quickly. The questions will also make important points stand out at the same time that explanatory detail is recognized as such. Turning a heading into a question can be done at the instant of reading the heading, but it demands a conscious effort on your part.

**READ** **Read** to answer that question, i.e., to the end of the first headed section. This is not a passive plodding along each line but an active search for the answer.

**RECITE** Having read the first section, look away from the book and try briefly to **recite** the answer to your question. Use your own words and cite an example. If you can do this, you know what is in the book; if you cannot, glance over the section again. An excellent way to do this is to jot down brief cue phrases in your outline. Read in this way until the entire assignment is completed.

**REVIEW** When the assignment has been read through in this way, **look over** your notes to get a bird's-eye view of the points and their relationship and check your memory of the content by reciting the major sub-points under each heading. This checking of memory can be done by covering up the notes and trying to recall the main points. Then expose each major point and try to recall the sub-points listed under it.

These five steps of the **SQ3R method** - survey, question, read recite, review - should result in faster reading, and the fixing of the important points in memory. You will find one other worthwhile outcome: quiz questions will seem familiar because the headings turned into questions are usually the points emphasized in the quizzes. By predicting

the actual quiz questions and looking up the answers beforehand, you will know that you are effectively studying what is considered important in the course.