

# READING A TEXTBOOK OR ARTICLE: SQ3R AND S.M.A.R.T.

## SQ3R Method

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.

**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**    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.

**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 Read in this way until the entire assignment is completed.

**REVIEW**        When the reading 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.

- Revisit material briefly
- Synthesize material
- Evaluate material

Other ways to question:

- What do the terms / vocabulary mean?
- What is this example trying to demonstrate?
- What is the point of this paragraph?
- How is the author making his point?
- What does this reading mean?
- How is the reading organized?
- Can I relate this to my own experience? My previous learning?

## **S.M.A.R.T. Method (Self-Monitoring Approach to Reading and Thinking)**

S.M.A.R.T. is designed to facilitate remembering via understanding. When using S.M.A.R.T., do not try to memorize anything, try to understand. Remembering comes much easier after understanding, and understanding often eliminates the need to memorize.

1. Survey the reading assignment and identify several logical points in the section where you will stop to check your understanding (e.g., after subsections.) Rarely should you study more than two pages without reviewing in order to better understand
2. As you read each segment of the text, do the following:
  - a) put a check in the margin where you understand.
  - b) put a question mark in the margin where you do not understand
3. After reading each segment, explain to yourself (in your own words) what you do not understand. You can look in the back of the text while you do this.
4. Examine what you do not understand and do these things:
  - a) read again the part that you did not understand
  - b) try to identify what is causing the problem (e.g., is it a word, a phrase, or a relationship?)
  - c) try to think of something you might do to help you understand
  - d) if you could think of something to help you understand (e.g., the glossary, a graph, reviewing the previous text) try it out! If you eventually understand something that was causing a problem, erase the question mark and replace it with a check.
  - e) explain to yourself what you still do not understand
5. Continue to the next segment. Repeat steps 2, 3 and 4.
6. After clarifying your understanding and non-understanding in each segment, return to any preceding segments and re-examine what you previously identified as items that you do not understand. Do they make any sense now? If not, don't worry, continue. If so, it is probably because you learned something new in the last segment and that means that a question mark can now be replaced with a check.
7. When you finish the entire selection, do the following:
  - a) close the book and explain to yourself what you understand.
  - b) look back at the text and refresh your memory for anything that you left out (don't worry about what you do not understand and don't try to memorize it; you can ask someone about it later.)
  - c) re-examine what you still do not understand. Think about those items. What could they possibly mean? Is there anything that you could do to understand them?
8. Close the book and explain to yourself one last time what you understood.