



Active Reading

SQ4R Study Method

The SQ4R Method provides a systematic way of attacking textbook reading assignments. It encourages active rather than passive reading. In **passive reading**, one simply decodes the words without any mental engagement with the information in the text. In **active reading**, one is deliberately seeking information from a text by asking questions, anticipating information to come, making connections with previously read material, or formulating personal reactions. The more mental interaction one has with the text, the more likely one will understand and retain it for a test.

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| Survey | Scan material to get a general idea of the material.
Read the introduction and main headings.
Look at pictures and graphs.
Read summary and end of chapter questions. |
| Question | Ask questions by turning main headings into questions--
What? Where? When? Why? How?
Form questions using graphs, charts, bold words, introductions, and summaries. |
| Read | Read with definite questions in mind.
Attempt to answer these questions and organize the material in your own mind.
Read only to the end of each headed section. |
| Recite | Look away from the material and ask yourself the questions.
Answer them out loud.
If you cannot answer the questions, go back over the material and read it again. |
| Record
(Write) | Underline in text.
Take notes—jot down concepts, not complete sentences.
See handout on Taking Notes (Cornell Style). |
| Review | Review each headed section briefly as you complete it.
Review the complete section later.
Use notes rather than the book to refresh your memory.
Plan regular reviews. |

*This handout was adapted from a similar one used by Columbia College's Academic Achievement Center.