

Reading Textbooks with SQ4R Method

The **SQ4R** method uses six simple steps to help you understand and retain textbook material. Before starting, make sure you're prepared to read effectively by setting aside focused time and minimizing distractions.

Pre-Reading Preparation

*Maximize your concentration by:

- Studying in the same place to build mental associations and boost focus and retention.
- Minimizing distractions and setting time limits.
- Studying in short sessions (15–40 minutes) with regular breaks (3–15min)
- Studying during the times of day when you're most alert.



*Get familiar with your textbook:

- Skim key sections to understand structure and purpose of text.
- *Introduction/Preface*: learn the author's goals, approach, and organization.
- *Table of Contents*: identify main topics and flow.
- *Chapters*: note objectives, subheadings, bolded terms, and summaries.
- *Glossary*: review key terms and use it as a reference while reading.



The Six Steps of SQ4R

1

Survey

Preview the chapter:

- Read the introduction and learning objectives.
- Look over the headings and subheadings. If there are no headings, read the first sentence of each paragraph.
- Read the chapter summary and/or chapter questions.
- Review any visuals like pictures, charts or graphs that catch your attention

Note: the next 3–4 steps are repeated for each section within a chapter



2

Question

- Take the title of the section you're reading and rephrase it as a question you want answered. This helps you focus, gives you a purpose for reading, and encourages active engagement.
- Decide which ideas best answer your question and how they connect to the main point.



3

Read

- After turning the heading into a question, read the section to find the answers.
- Focus on identifying the main points and supporting details that help answer your question.
- Highlight or underline the main points as you go. This active reading process helps you understand and evaluate the material.
- Adjust your reading speed based on the complexity and importance of the content.



4

Recite

- After reading the passage, take time to paraphrase or summarize the information.
- Ask yourself: *"What were the most important points in this section?"*
- If you're unsure, use clues such as section headings, keywords, or chapter titles to identify the key ideas.



5

Record

- Put the information into your own words to make it easier to remember and process. Paraphrasing improves retention and understanding.
- You can take notes in a separate notebook or annotate the text directly as you read.



6

Review

- Review regularly to strengthen memory.
- At minimum, revisit the chapter or your notes within 24 hours, then again within a week, and finally just before the exam.
- As you review, look over the headings and check if you can recall the main ideas.
- Summarize the material connected to each heading to reinforce understanding.

