

# SQ4R: How to Get the Most Out of Reading Your Textbook

## IF YOU WANT TO CONCENTRATE BETTER..

Read and study in the same place.

Minimize distractions, noises, and sights which may interfere with your ability to concentrate.

Set time limits.

- ☞ Read and study in short bursts (*15 minutes minimum, 50 minutes maximum*).
- ☞ Take regular breaks between study periods (*3 minutes to 15 minutes*)
- ☞ Study according to your biological clock.

## IF YOUR TEXT IS NEW TO YOU....

Before you begin to read a textbook for the first time, you should preview it.

Glance over the following features of your textbook:

The introduction and/or preface and/or forward

- ☞ This informs you of the author's purpose, the author's biases, how the author wants you to use the book, and how the book is organized.

The table of contents

- ☞ This gives you an idea of the topics covered in the text and shows you how the material is ordered.

The text chapters

- ☞ You can see how the chapters are arranged. Are there learning objectives at the start of each chapter? Are there subheadings? Words in bold print that you need to know? Is there a summary of each chapter's main points?

The glossary

- ☞ This list gives you an idea of the number of new terms, and provides a handy reference if you need to look up a word.

# SQ4R

## SURVEY

Before starting to read, it is important to survey the chapter. To survey a 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 the chapter questions
- ☞ look at any pictures, charts, or graphs that catch your attention

**NOTE:** Question, Read, Rewrite, and sometimes Record, are repeated for each section of a chapter.

## QUESTION

For the section of a chapter facing you, ask a question you would like answered. Turning headings into questions focuses your attention, provides you with a purpose for reading, and encourages you to read actively. Sort and evaluate ideas, to determine if they answer your questions.

## READ

Having turned the heading into a question, now read the section in search of the answers. Read to determine the main points and details that answer your questions, highlighting or underlining the points as you go. This process helps you to understand and evaluate what you have read. Adjust reading speed to material.

## RECITE

Having read the passage, take a moment to paraphrase or summarize the information. Test your comprehension: "The most important points in this section were..."

## RECORD

Most students benefit from writing notes. By paraphrasing information, your understanding and retention increases. Take notes in a separate book or in the text.

## REVIEW

Review the chapter or your notes within 24 hours, then again within a week, and finally just before an exam. Look back over headings in the chapter or in your notes, and see whether you can remember the main material that goes with them.