

LEARNING ABOUT STUDY-READING

What Is Study-Reading?

Study-reading is a method for reading nonfiction materials such as textbooks which helps you to concentrate and pay attention as you read so that you can:

- find the important information
- understand key points and concepts
- organize the information for learning
- relate new information to information you already know.

There are many different methods of study-reading. In this chapter you will be shown a method to practice and adapt to your own style of learning.

Why Is Study-Reading Important?

Without a study-reading method, chances are that you will remember very little of what you read. If you read your textbooks like you read novels and popular magazines, your rate of reading will be too fast to pick up the facts and important details that your teacher may expect you to learn.

Study-reading techniques help you to get the “big picture”—the general meaning—as well as to fill in the details or supporting information. Study-reading methods also help you keep your mind on what you are reading. If your mind is wandering or daydreaming, it is not on the material you are trying to read and learn. You will “draw a blank” at the end of the page and will have to reread. Study-reading, if done correctly, saves you time because you pay attention to and learn the information the first time you read.

How Do You Study-Read?

Each subject you study requires special reading skills for the following reasons:

- the way the content is organized
- the difficulty of the vocabulary
- the length of the sentences
- the number of facts and details
- the types of things you are required to learn.

The first thing you should do in preparing to read an assignment in any of your textbooks is to know the following about your textbook:

- the parts of your textbook
 - preface
 - chapter introductions
 - study guides
 - index
 - table of content
 - summaries
 - glossary
 - appendices
- where each part is located in the book
- what the part is used for
- how the parts are organized into the total book
- how you can use each part for study-reading.

You can increase your study effectiveness by knowing what study aids are already included in your book. For example, if you run across a word or term you don't know, you can look it up in the glossary in your book. If the chapters in your books have introductions or summaries, you can read those first to get an idea of what the chapter is about. This will help you bring up information you already know about the subject as well as raise some questions.

By becoming familiar with the structure of a book or article before you begin to read, you will have an idea of how to read it. For example, if the chapters in the book are divided into sections for you with headings and sub-headings, you can easily decide how much to read at a time. If not, you will have to look over the material to see how you can logically divide it to get the most out of it as you read.

Be an active reader by making notes as you go along. If you are allowed to write in your books, use a highlighter to mark key words and phrases. *Always* read an entire paragraph before you mark any part of it or take notes on it. You cannot really determine what is most important until you have read the whole paragraph. Then, go back and highlight only the most important points. Students who mark their books as they read highlight too much information. Thus, they have extra information to go over when they review and study.

To take organized notes from your reading material, use the titles, subtitles, and headings provided for you in your book as headings in your notes. You can then jot down brief notes under each of your headings to remind you of the key points. Be sure to write down any words or definitions that are printed in bold letters. The special type such as ALL CAPITAL LETTERS, *italics*, and boldface used for

some words and phrases shows you that the author thinks they are important and that you should pay special attention to them. If your book doesn't have subtitles or isn't broken into sections for you, you will have to work a little harder to identify main ideas as you read. Restate the main ideas in your own words and write them down. Summarize key points and concepts. Copy accurately any new terms and their definitions. The more accurate and complete your notes, the better study tool you will have. In Chapter 10, "Memory for Learning," you will be shown how to write memory cards to master key points.

One of the best methods for study-reading textbooks that can be used in most classes is SQ3R. Each symbol in the name of this study-reading skill stands for a step the reader follows in using this method.

■ The steps of SQ3R are:

Survey. Read the title. Look over the whole chapter taking a quick *glance* at the *subtitles*, and *headings*. Read any *summaries*. This step should take about 5 to 10 minutes.

What will the survey step do for you? A quick survey will give you an overview (somewhat like a preview at the movies) of what will be covered in the assignment. This overview forms an outline for the information you will get from study-reading. By surveying the chapter, you can see how to divide it up for reading and studying. Surveying the assignment before you begin to read it can result in learning more in less time (increased reading speed and comprehension).

Question. Turn *titles*, *subtitles* and *headings* into *questions* which you will try to answer as you read. There are only 6 kinds of questions you can ask about anything. They are:

<i>Who?</i>	<i>Where?</i>	<i>Why?</i>	<i>What?</i>	<i>When?</i>	<i>How?</i>
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Any other question is nothing more than a modified form of these 6 questions, such as:

<i>What if?</i>	<i>What about?</i>	<i>Why not?</i>	<i>How many?</i>	<i>How much?</i>
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If you make a conscious effort to turn titles and headings into questions, your attention will be drawn to the material. For example, the title of this chapter is "Study-Reading." From this title, you might ask yourself, "What is study-reading?" "How will study-reading help me?" "Is it hard to study-read?" Now, you have a purpose for reading and a reason to pay attention to what you read—to find the answers to your questions. As you read to answer your questions, you will experience more interest in the material and deeper concentration than you would if you read the chapter "cold"—without questions.

Sometimes questions for discussion or study are provided for you at the back of the chapter. Always find and read these questions before you start to read the chapter. They are *clues* to the information that the author thinks is most significant. Let these *questions*, along with your own, *direct you in your reading* because they cover the most important ideas in the chapter. It may be helpful to copy these questions on a separate sheet of paper to remind you of what to look for as you read.

Read (R-1). Read with the definite *purpose* of making an active *search* for the *answers* to your questions or those that are provided in the text for you.

Recite (R-2). After you read a section under a heading, look away from the book and answer the questions you asked for that section. Answer either aloud or in writing. *Use your own words* to answer the questions. Support your answers with examples from the text. See if you can relate the information from the text to information you already know. If you can do all of this, then you know the material. If you cannot, then review the section again. Finally, if you didn't write out the answers to your questions, do it before you start another section. These notes will help you remember what you studied when you review them at a later time.

Review (R-3). After you have finished reading your assignment, begin to review it in sections. Pick a portion of the material you have chosen to study and look over your notes for an overall picture of the main points. Check your retention (how much you remember) by repeating step 4. Cover the main headings and recite the major points. Take only 5 to 10 minutes for this step.

The extra minutes you spend in using SQ3R will pay off when you discover that you won't need to reread your assignment to study it. The more you use SQ3R, the easier it will be for you to use it.

After you practice and use the SQ3R method, you will be able to adjust it to suit your own needs. Whether or not you continue to follow all of the steps of SQ3R, practice using the complete method until it becomes "natural" to you. You may wonder whether using this method will increase the amount of time it will take you to read your assignment. Until you learn how to use the method, it will take more time. But, once you learn and apply the method, it will save you time. The following exercises will guide you in practicing and learning the SQ3R method.

EXERCISES

SR-1. Naming the Steps of SQ3R

Each letter of the SQ3R method represents a symbol for the steps you should follow in using the method. Write the step for each letter below:

S _____

Q _____

R (1) _____

R (2) _____

R (3) _____

Check your answers by looking back at the SQ3R section of this chapter.

SR-2. Knowing the Steps of SQ3R

Define the steps of SQ3R. You may look back over the text for help if you need it.

STEP 1: S = SURVEY

List 3 things you do to survey a chapter:

■ _____

■ _____

■ _____

What is the purpose of surveying a chapter?

STEP 2: Q = QUESTION

Write down ways you can form questions from your reading assignment:

How does asking questions about the material you are reading help you learn the information?

STEP 3: R-1 = READ

What should your purpose be as you read?

STEP 4: R-2 = RECITE

To recite, you should:

STEP 5: R-3 = REVIEW

Tell what you should do to review a chapter:

Check your answers against the Answer Key in Appendix A.