

SQR3 Strategy for Improving Reading Comprehension

The SQ3R method is designed to help you read faster and retain more. SQ3R stands for the steps in reading: survey, question, read, recite, review. It might seem like it takes more time to use the SQ3R method, but you'll find that you retain more and have to reread less often. Here are the steps:

Survey Before reading, survey the material. Glance through the topic headings and try to get an overview of the reading. Skim the sections and read the final summary paragraph to get an idea of where the chapter is going. Only spend a few minutes surveying the reading to get a background knowledge, an initial orientation that will help you to organize the material as you read it. It eases you into the reading assignment

Question Look at the first heading in the chapter. Turn it into a question. Ask questions to be answered in your reading. This step requires conscious effort, but is worth it as it leads to active reading, the best way to retain written material. Asking questions focuses your concentration on what you need to learn or get out of your reading.

Read Read the first section of your reading assignment to answer your question. Actively search for the answer to your question. If you finish the section and haven't answered the question, reread it. Read reflectively. Consider what the author is trying to say, and think about how you can use that information.

Recite Once you've read an initial section, look away and try to recite the answer to your question, using your own words and examples. If you can do this, it means that you understand the material. If you can't, glance over the section again. Once you have the answers to your questions, write them down.

Review After reading the entire assignment, test your memory by asking yourself the questions that you've identified. Review your notes for an overview the chapter. Consider how it fits with what you know from the course, experience, and other classes. What is the material's significance? What are the implications or applications of this material? What questions are you left with?