

## THE SQ3R STUDY METHOD

One of the most successful and most widely used methods of studying written material is the SQ3R method, first developed at Ohio State University. Researchers had noted that students who were more successful were more active readers. This method teaches you the same skills which have made many thousands of students successful. If you use this method when you read and study, you will be more successful, too. If not, there's always snake oil.

The S stands for SURVEY. After you have read the overview or chapter outline and the list of learning objectives, you should survey the chapter in the text. This is also called skimming. Look at the headings and subheadings, and get the gist of the major points in this chapter. If you have an outline of the chapter (some books provide them), check off each point as you pass it in the pages of the text.

The Q stands for QUESTIONS. Reading is greatly enhanced if you are searching for the answers to questions. For this text, the study guide provides learning objectives which can serve as questions. For other texts, make up questions for yourself, based on the chapter overview or on your own survey of the chapter. Be sure that you have at least one question for each major unit in the chapter, or you will find less efficiency in studying those units for which you do not have questions.

The first of the three R's is for READ. As you read, look for the answers to the questions you posed or to the study or learning objectives furnished for you. When you find material which answers these questions, put a mark (X) in the margin next to that material. This will help now, since you are actively involved, and later, after you have read the entire chapter at least once, so you will know what is and what is not most important.

The second R is for RECITE. One of the oldest classroom techniques in the world (Aristotle used it) is recitation. In the classroom version, the teacher asks the questions and the students answer them. Unless you can get your teacher to study with you regularly, you'll have to play both roles. (Incidentally, if you do get your teacher to study with you regularly, please write and let me know how you accomplished it. Thanks.)

Stop periodically in your reading and say aloud (if possible) what the author is telling you. Try to put it in your own words, but be sure to use technical terms as you learn them. If you are not in a situation where you can recite out loud, do it in writing. Just thinking it is not enough.

People who do not use recitation usually forget half of what they read in one hour, and another half of the half they remembered by the end of the day. People who use recitation often remember from 75 to 99 percent of what they studied. This technique pays off. By the way, if anyone questions why you are talking to yourself, tell them that a psychologist recommended it.

When should you pause to recite? A good rule of thumb is that each time you come to the end of a major subheading, you should recite. I like to encourage my students to recite at least one sentence at the end of each paragraph, and two or three or more sentences at the end of each subunit (when you come to a new heading). Who ever said that students should be seen and not heard?

The third R in (SQ3R, remember?) is for REVIEW. You should review a chapter soon after you have studied it (using the SQ and first 2 R's). You should review it again the day or evening before a test. It is not usually helpful to cram the night before a test, and particularly not the day of the test! That type of study does not produce good memory, and is likely to make you more anxious during the test itself.