

Faculty of Community Services

Academic Support & Resource Centre

How to Use the SQ4R Reading Method

When reading for academic purposes, the overall goal is to extract the most important information from a text and make connections to the material with which you are presented. One means for identifying and making connections with your readings is through the SQ4R method.

Before you read, Survey your text...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Look to your reading's title, headings, and subheadings ✓ Scan the introduction and conclusion of the text ✓ Pay attention to pictures, charts, graphs, or maps (and their captions) ✓ Skim any review or study questions
Ask Questions while you are surveying...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Turn the text's title, headings, and/or subheadings into questions; for example, the heading "Critical Social Work" could be turned into "What is Critical Social Work?" ✓ Ask yourself, "What did or might my instructor say about this chapter?" or "How does this piece of writing relate to my field of study/placement?"
When you begin to Read...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Note all the underlined, italicized, or bolded words or phrases ✓ Study visual aids ✓ Reduce speed for difficult passages; re-read and begin to paraphrase ✓ Answer questions at the beginning or end of chapters ✓ Look for answers to the questions you raised earlier
Respond to your questions...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Close your reading and attempt to answer the questions you posed earlier ✓ Reread the section (or seek alternate resources) if you cannot answer the questions you posed
Record your responses...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Summarize answers to your questions in your own words ✓ Your responses can later be turned into cue cards and other study aids ✓ Consistently asking and responding to questions and recording your answers means that when it comes time to prepare for a test or exam, you can review your questions and answers instead of the full text
Review: an ongoing process...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Have a regular review period (usually once a week); this is an effective strategy for retaining information and building on your knowledge ✓ Start from the beginning of the course in each review session; the volume of material to review increases as the semester progresses, but the amount of time needed to review older materials decreases ✓ Continue to pose higher-order questions to deepen your understanding and interpret texts critically

These are valuable resources related to critical reading (including those adapted for this handout):

Study Guides and Strategies. *The SQ3R reading method*. Retrieved from <http://www.studygs.net/texred2.htm>
 SUNY Empire State College. *Interpreting texts critically: Asking questions*. Retrieved from <http://www.esc.edu/online-writing-center/resources/critical-reading-writing/general-reading/interpreting-texts-asking-questions/>
 University of Guelph Learning Commons. *SQ4R studying*. Retrieved from <http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/get-assistance/studying/effective-studying/sq4r-studying>