

Read Effectively with SQ3R

Reading university-level material is very different from reading for fun.

Use the SQ3R method to read effectively. You'll manage your time, prepare for tests, and understand the course material.

Survey

Before you start reading, survey the text. This will give you ideas about what to expect in terms of the content and its organization.

Survey the following:

- Titles
- Headings
- Summary
- Practice Questions
- Study Guides
- Captions for figures, graphs, and tables

You don't have to read a text in the order that it appears! Surveying the different sections gives you important information.

The Summary or Conclusion break down the main points of the reading.

The Practice Questions, if applicable, show you how you will apply your learning.

Question

Brainstorm questions based on the text.

Try these strategies:

- Turn every heading into a question.
- Connect the content back to your lectures.
- Note what you already know about the content.

Consider writing down the questions you create.

These questions can always be used as practice tools when you study for your tests and exams.

Read

As you begin reading, find the answers to the questions you made. Break up the text into smaller pieces and read each one.

Try these other strategies:

- Pay attention to **bold**, *italicized*, or underlined words.
- Refer to the textbook's side notes and annotations.

- Check other resources for alternate explanations or further clarification.

Unlike reading for fun, reading a university text is much more active. You might need to take more frequent breaks to review and answer questions. All of these tasks are part of reading!

Reading doesn't have to be something you do alone. Consider forming your own reading groups to discuss the content and brainstorm questions.

Recite

Without looking back at the text, summarize the key ideas in your own words. Write down the answers to the questions you made.

Apply your knowledge by solving reading comprehension and practice questions included in the text. If there aren't any questions, try making your own.

It can be tempting to look back at what the text says, but you need to put it away as you recite. You might say what you remember out loud or write it down.

Look at past exams for your course for examples of how your understanding can be tested.

Review

Practice what you learned over time. Take a break after reading and test yourself by answering the questions you created. If you're not satisfied with your answers, review the reading and add to your notes.

While you were reciting, were there any gaps in your understanding? Go back and fill in those blanks.

Are you looking for a place to test your knowledge in a group? Join an FSG (Facilitated Study Group) to meet new people and practice skills that are related to the course. For more information visit the RGASC: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/facilitated-study-groups-fsgs>.

Looking for more Effective Reading Resources?

Check out the [Elements of Academic Reading Workshop Series](#). You'll learn how to become a more effective and efficient reader and get a CCR notation on your transcript.

Elements of Academic Reading Workshop: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/elements-academic-reading-workshop>

Book an appointment at the RGASC to discuss reading strategies and study skills with an instructor: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/appointments-undergraduate>