

How to use the SQ3R strategy

This page explains how to use SQ3R to help you focus on, understand and remember what you're reading or studying.

What is SQ3R?

SQ3R is a tried and tested study strategy. It not only helps you understand and remember but can also help you identify the information you need to write an assignment.

SQ3R is an acronym which stands for

Survey (or **S**kim)

Question

Read

Recite (or **R**ecall)

Revision

The reason why SQ3R is so popular is because it works! Try it and see for yourself...

How to use SQ3R

Before starting to read or study, break down the task into manageable chunks, i.e. a chapter or topic.

Then **survey or skim** the section you're going to read/study.

- Page through the text to get an overall impression.
- Look at headings, bold or italicised print, graphics, boxed text.
- Do you see anything familiar? Do you see anything new?

Question – think about the topic and ask yourself the following questions.

- What do I already know about it?
- What do I want to know about it?
- What do I expect to learn about it?
- What must I remember about it?

Read – you'll most likely have to read the text a number of times to make sure you understand it and can remember what it's about.

- First read it right through the text and see how much you understand.
- While reading, note the most important parts but don't mark the text at this stage as you may not have fully understood it or be able to identify the most important parts.
- Read the text again! This time, mark/underline the keywords in the text (as long as it's yours!). Use a pencil at this stage as you might change your mind about the key words and what's most important.
- Re-read any parts that are still not clear.
- Try to link what you are reading to what you already know.
- If there are any new words/jargon/technical terms that you don't understand, look them up. If you can't find the meanings, check with your lecturer/tutor. And if you need to

remember them, write them down, together with the definitions. (Try using flash cards to help you remember them – when you open the link, scroll down.)

After reading, **recall or recite** what you have just read. In other words: try to remember what you have read without looking at the text or your notes. You should also:

- Decide what the main points are.
- Write down the main points, using your own words to explain what they mean.

It might help to tell another student or a family member what you have learnt.

Alternatively, pretend you have to teach the topic – think about how you'd explain it to someone who knows nothing about it. Remember, teaching is one of the best ways of learning!

And last but definitely not least, you need to **review** the work you've learned. This step is very important as it helps 'fix' the information in your long-term memory.

Open Polytechnic, (n.d) 'How to use the SQ3R strategy'. Retrieved from:

<http://www.openpolytechnic.ac.nz/study-with-us/study-resources-for-students/how-to-study-concentrate-and-remember-what-you-ve-learnt/how-to-use-the-sq3r-strategy/>