

The amount of material you have to read for classes increases dramatically when you take university level courses. The material also gets a lot tougher. We talked to our tutors and researched ways you can work smarter, not harder, so you can retain what you are reading in class and avoid cramming for exams later on.

SQ3R is the most popular and influential active reading/study system. SQ3R provides guidelines on how to actively engage with texts before, during and after you read.

### **Here are the Steps: S – Survey Q – Question R – Read R – Recite R - Review**

#### **1. Survey**

- ❖ Before reading, look over the text. This helps you see how the text fits into the bigger picture of the class, connects to what you already know, and gets you focused. Surveying is a quick preview and should take very little time. Here are things to look for and think about when surveying your text:
  - Who wrote it and when?
  - What type of text is it (academic scholarship, public scholarship, fiction, autobiography, review, analysis)?
  - How does the text relate to course content?
  - What do you need to learn from the text and why?
  - Read introduction material, the summaries, abstract, etc.
  - Read section headings, subheadings, boldfaced words, etc.
  - Skim over graphs, tables, charts, etc. to see how they support and explain the text.
  - Set a realistic goal for how much/how long you will read.

#### **2. Question**

- ❖ To maximize your understanding, you need to read with a purpose. Reading with a purpose in mind makes it easier to be an active reader, and active readers better comprehend and recall what they read. The best way to read actively is to pose questions in advance and read to answer those questions. Questions can be created by doing the following:
  - Turn the title, headings, and/or subheadings into questions.
  - Answer the practice questions at the end of the section/chapter.
  - Ask yourself, “What do I already know about this subject?”
  - Create your own practice questions - Who? What? When? Where? How? Why does this matter?

#### **3. Read**

- ❖ Now that you’re prepared, begin reading with the goal to answer your questions. This helps you learn, analyze, and reflect on course content, as well as prepare for class and, eventually, exams.
  - Try to locate the answers to the questions you posed in your survey of the text.
  - Underline, highlight, annotate main ideas, important points, connections to other texts/ideas, and to note questions that arise.
  - Think, interpret, and analyze the first time you read, to avoid unnecessary re-reading.
  - Take breaks when you need to.

#### **4. Recite**

- ❖ After reading the entire text or sections, recite the answers to the questions you posed, as well as the important points and/or main ideas. Your goal should be to answer your questions and recite important information from memory.
  - Orally ask yourself questions about what you have just read or summarize, in your own words, what you read.

- Without looking at the text, recall your questions and see if you can answer from your memory of the text.
- Write a brief summary, short notes, flash cards, or outlines of what you just read. Be brief to avoid losing reading momentum!

## **5. Review**

- ❖ Reviewing helps you keep the material fresh in your mind so you can retain and recall the information for longer periods of time. It also helps you prepare for class, quizzes, papers and exams.
- Look over the text, your notes, markings and annotations.
- Quiz yourself by answering the questions you posed in Step 2: Question.
- Note connections between the reading you just did and ideas and concepts from other readings, class lectures and/or discussions.
- Repeat this process weekly to build your memory.

### **Review the Materials**

#### **❖ Day One**

- After you have read and recited the entire chapter, write questions in the margins for those points you have highlighted or underlined.
- If you took notes while reciting, write questions for the notes you have taken in the left hand margins of your notebook.

#### **❖ Day Two**

- Page through the text and/or your notebook to re-acquaint yourself with the important points.
- Cover the right-hand column of your text/note-book and orally ask yourself the questions in the left hand margins.
- Orally recite or write the answers from memory.
- Make flash cards for those questions which give you difficulty.
- Develop mnemonic devices for material which need to be memorized.

#### **❖ Days Three, Four and Five**

- Alternate between your flash cards and notes and test yourself (orally or writing) on the questions you formulated.
- Make additional flash cards of necessary.

#### **❖ Weekend**

- Using the text and notebook, make a Table of Contents – list all the topics and sub-topics you need to know from the chapter. From the Table of Contents, make a Study Sheet/ Spatial Map. Recite the information orally and in your own words as you put the Study Sheet/Map together.
- Now that you have consolidated all the information you need for that chapter, periodically review the Sheet/Map so that at test time you will not have to cram.