



The Art of Active Reading

Try the SQ4R method of reading!

1. Survey

- ◆ Overview the chapter before you begin reading.
- ◆ Browse headings and subheadings and look at diagrams or pictures to gain an idea of what is in the chapter.
- ◆ If there is a summary or outline at the beginning or end of the chapter, read it first.
- ◆ Think about what you already know about these topics.
- ◆ If there are vocabulary lists provided, write the terms in your notebook and leave spaces for the definitions. Fill them in later as you read through the text.

2. Question

- ◆ Begin to think about what you may learn in this chapter.
- ◆ Try turning the title and headings into questions. Write them down in your notes.
- ◆ Write down any other questions that you think of during the survey.
- ◆ Read and write down in your notes any questions that are given in the chapter.

3. Read (actively!)

- ◆ *Read the text in manageable chunks!* Do not attempt to read your whole assignment in one sitting. Determine how much you can read at a time and separate your reading into parts.
- ◆ Try to search for answers to questions as you read.
- ◆ Look for relationships between the topics you are reading; see how things fit together.
- ◆ When you encounter a word you don't know, look it up in a dictionary or in the glossary for the book. Try to use context clues to figure it out. If you still don't understand the word, make a note of it and ask later.
- ◆ Make a note of any parts that confused you and try to generate questions for those parts.

4. **R**ecite

- ◆ Recite answers to questions out loud.
- ◆ Read aloud definitions to new vocabulary terms.
- ◆ State aloud key concepts or facts.
- ◆ If you are confused by a passage, re-read it out loud.

5. **wR**ite

- ◆ Keep your notebook open next to you and take notes while you are reading, just as you would during a lecture.
- ◆ As you read, stop every few paragraphs and write down a summary (in your own words!!) of what you have just read. This ensures you don't understand a concept but then forget it as you keep reading.
- ◆ Reduce the information in the text to written key points.
- ◆ Fill in term definitions and write the answers to the questions you wrote down during the Survey and Question steps.
- ◆ Draw charts or maps of the concepts in the chapter as you read.

6. **R**eview

- ◆ Review your notes and see what you can add to them or what you may have missed.
- ◆ Make sure you found the answers to all your questions and the definitions for all the terms.
- ◆ If you didn't find or understand everything, make a list of problem areas and questions. Then make an appointment with your instructor or a tutor to go over these areas.
- ◆ Start thinking of what types of questions you might be asked on a test or quiz of this material. Take any practice quizzes if they are in the textbook or provided by your course instructor.

For more assistance with textbook reading, please make an appointment with Learning Services by contacting 301-447-5006 or stopping by 1st floor Borders.

Some of the information provided on this handout was taken from:

http://www.fastol.com/~renkwitz/sq4r_study_method.htm.