

ACTIVE READING

Many college students discover that there is significantly more to read in college than there was in high school. Students frequently share that they do not have enough time to read all of their assignments during the week. Use these tips to improve both the efficiency and comprehension level of your reading. Utilize one of the Active Reading strategies below to improve your reading efficiency.

SQ3R Method for Thorough Study

Step 1: Survey— Look over material critically. Skim through the book and read the topic and subtopic headings and sentences. Read the summaries at the end of chapters and books. Try to anticipate what the author is going to say. **Write notes out in sequence.** Then, review the notes as a whole to preview where you are “going” with this reading.

Step 2: Questions— Instead of reading paragraph headings such as “Basic Concepts or Reading,” read it as “What are the Basic Concepts of Reading?” These questions will become **hooks** to anchor the information you read. Write out these questions. Look over the questions to see the emphasis and direction the author is taking. Then, attempt to give plausible answers before further reading.

Step 3: Read— Read with attentiveness to answer the questions. Write notes in your own words under each question. Take a minimal amount of notes. Use these notes as a skeleton for additional information to be added.

Step 4: Recall— Without looking at your book or notes, mentally visualize, in your own words, the main points of the material immediately after finishing the reading. This allows you to check your understanding, channels the material into a natural and useable form, and shows you what you don’t understand. NOTE: more time should be spent on recall than reading.

Step 5: Review:— Look at your questions, answers, notes and book to see how well you complete recall. Focus on the points recalled incorrectly or the ones you forgot. Carefully fix in your mind the logical sequences of the entire idea, concept, or problem. Finish with a mental picture of the WHOLE.

3 R’s for Academic Survival

R1: Read— Read the chapter paragraph by paragraph. Read and re-read until you can answer the question, “what did the author say in this paragraph?”

R2: Record— Once you are able to **describe** the main points in the paragraph, you will want to retain that information by **underlining, or taking notes in the margins or a notebook.**

R3: Recite— Cover up your notes and **recite** them out loud. Remember: if you can’t say it now, you won’t be able to tomorrow in class, and you won’t be able to write about it on an exam. While you still have a chance, try and try again, until you can verbalize what you read.

How can you strengthen your comprehension?

- **Analyze the time and place in which you are reading**
 - Reading for several hours can cause mental fatigue. Take breaks!
 - Reading where there are many distractions can be counterproductive
- **Rephrase each paragraph in your own words**
 - Stating the information in your own words will help you understand the material better
- **Read difficult sentences or sections aloud**
 - Listening to yourself can help you understand the information better
 - Don't hesitate to reread difficult or complicated sections
 - Slow down your reading rate
- **Write questions that will point you to the meaning of the section next to headings**
 - Refer to your questions often. Write down or underline the answers in the text
 - Write a brief outline of major points
- **Underline key ideas**
 - This forces you to find the important information and helps recall information
- **Write notes in the margins**
- **Determine if you lack background information**
 - Sometimes you may not know the background information about the text you're reading. Try and consult other sections of the text, reference material, or ask your professor for other sources

