

Survey

When you are looking at a chapter within a text, try reading it like you would read a newspaper or magazine. Start by skimming through a section, reading the subject headings and any definitions that appear in boldface print. Look at the pictures and figures carefully -- these are chosen to illustrate and highlight the essential points of the text. Look at the introduction and summary. Look at the following:

chapter title and introduction. Are any objectives listed?

headings, subheadings, and topic sentences.

This will help you to understand how the topics are related.

boldfaced and italicized words, diagrams, and charts.

This will help you become familiar with terminology, relationships, and procedures.

chapter summary and any review questions.

Question

Questions should help you to direct your learning. Develop questions that encourage you to look for the information. This activity is more about keeping the brain actively involved. After the preview, you should be asking yourself two important questions:

- What is the chapter about?
- What do I already know about the subject of the chapter?

Questions, like the ones above, will help you to understand and remember the content. If it's hard to develop questions, then change the subject headings into questions. Each question should focus on a main idea, not on illustrations or details, and each should be expressed in your own words, not just copied from parts of the paragraph.

4 R's: Read, Recite, Review, and Reflect

The 4 R's will help you to read actively, remember what you've read, help you to review material, and encourage you to reflect on the new information and what it means to you. As you practice the SQ4R method, you will:

- Spend less time reading
- Remember more of what you've read
- Review information more efficiently
- Know the value of the source and the information and its value to you and your goals

1. Read the assignment.

First read the assignment quickly for a general overview of what's covered. Then, go back and read for the details. Keep a pen or a pencil, not a highlighter, in your hand. Write notes, questions and reactions in the margins. When you read you should be having a conversation with the text. Don't let it do all the talking -- react to it. Your response helps you formulate the meaning of the text. Check: can you answer the questions at the end of the chapter, can you participate in a class discussion of the material.

Underline.

The purpose of making marks in a text is to create signals for reviewing. By reading with a pen in your hand, you are also involving the sense of touch and motion to aid in remembering the material. Underline or highlight less than 10% of the text. If you take notes on a separate sheet of paper, include the page number that the idea is on. Write in the margins. Underline or note:

- Main ideas
- Names of important people, places or events
- Key terms and their meanings
- Summaries of important information
- Write a summary in your own words including only the main points
- Make a map or diagram that shows the relationships between main ideas

Make Note.

- Write definitions for any key terms you feel are essential.
- Write questions and answers you feel clarify the topic
- Write any questions for which you don't have answers—then make sure you find them through re-reading, further research or asking another student, tutor or your teacher.
- Make sure you understand the concepts expressed in the various graphs or charts.

2. Recite.

After you have read the material, take a look at the questions and comments that you wrote in the margin of the book or in your notes. Try to answer your questions or provide additional information about what you noted. By doing this aloud, it forces you to think. It also helps to lay down a new track in your brain. This will help you recall the information when you need it. If you are a visual learner, you as you recite aloud, visualize yourself teaching the material in front of the class. Include in your visualization any gestures you'd make, what methods you would use to explain your points, etc.

3. Review.

Do a complete review of the material you just read within 24 hours. This will help move the information from your short-term memory to the long-term memory. As you review, look at your notes and clear up anything that you don't understand. Don't be surprised by how much you've forgotten. Relearning is easier than learning a first time, and it tends to wear a deeper path into your memory.

4. Reflect on challenges to your beliefs and values.

Examine your personal responses. The reading that you do might challenge your attitudes, your unconsciously held beliefs, or your positions on current issues. Make a brief note in the margin about what you feel or about what in the text created the challenge. Now look again at the places you marked in the text where you felt personally challenged. What patterns do you see?