

## Moving from Reading to Learning (SQR<sup>5</sup>)

*We all read for many different reasons. But when it comes to reading a textbook, we read to learn. In most university classrooms, the textbook is a foundation for the lecture, the lab and all other learning experiences developed by the faculty member. It is designed to create both a foundation of knowledge and a depth of understanding in a specific discipline.*

*Using the seven steps (SQR<sup>5</sup>) discussed below will help you make the best use of your textbook while increasing your knowledge base.*



- 1 SURVEY:** Skim over the entire reading assignment so that you can preview the material and know what to expect. These are things you should be skimming for:

*The length of the reading assignment.* This will give you an idea of the time it will take you to read your assignment. Don't start a 60 minute reading assignment if you only have 10 minutes. Use your weekly planner to schedule the time needed to complete this critical task.

*The organization of the material.* Read the chapter titles, introductions, headings and sub-headings.


*Topics that are familiar or of interest to you.* Making connections between what you are reading and your prior knowledge will help you achieve higher levels of learning and retention.

*The focus of this chapter.* Reading the chapter summary, last few paragraphs and review questions will help increase your ability to understand the content as you read it for learning.

- 2 QUESTION:** Take time to think through what you have skimmed. What will be covered in your full reading? Do you already have questions about the content? Write these down. Then read for the answers to your questions.
- 3 READ<sup>1</sup>:** This is the most comprehensive step. Take the time to read (and re-read if necessary) the material until you have a good understanding of the content and the connections between the various sections. If there are content areas that you don't understand, make a note of them and ask your instructor or a tutor once you have finished the assignment.
- 4 RECORD<sup>2</sup>:** Write down brief notes with ideas, facts, or details from your reading. You can put these in the margins or on flash cards, mind maps, fishbone diagrams, etc. for future review sessions. The more you do to prepare your future study tools now, the better.
- 5 RECITE<sup>3</sup>:** Read out loud the questions you have written and the answers you have learned from your reading. This should give you a better understanding of the material and, in so doing, allow for better retention.

- ⑥ **REFLECT<sup>4</sup>:** You should reflect on what you are reading throughout your study of this material. Stop whenever you can weave new information or ideas with other information you already know. By making associations between what you already know and what you are trying to add to your memory, you increase both your understanding and retention of that new material.
- ⑦ **REVIEW<sup>5</sup>:** Allow time for a brief review at the end of each reading session. As little as 10 minutes of review each day will reduce your rate of forgetting from 80% to 20%.

Because learning is cumulative, building these short review sessions into your weekly calendar and completing them each day will help you learn today's lessons while reducing the time needed to learning tomorrow's new lessons as well.

 See *Using Bloom's Taxonomy for Successful Learning*, *Reading College Textbooks Effectively*, and *Finding the Main Idea*, for more suggestions for increasing your learning and understanding.

## Find the Main Ideas in Reading

As you skim your textbook, look for the following clues that will help you identify the main idea(s) in your reading assignment:

1. **Titles, Headings, and Sub-Headings.** By placement, size and visual prompts (any kind of decorative item which draws your attention), these announce major subjects and ideas.
2. **Purpose Sentence.** If present, a purpose sentence will be found in the first paragraph of a book, chapter or article. The statement tells you what the rest of the text will be about.
3. **Pre-Outline or Overview.** A sentence(s) or phrase(s) which lists the ideas to be developed in that section of the text.
4. **Topic Sentence.** A sentence that states the subject and focus of the following material.
5. **Italics and/or Boldface Type.** Main ideas that stand out from the rest of the text.
6. **Repetition.** Repetition of a key word or idea throughout a text indicates that it is a major topic to be remembered.
7. **Questions.** Questions invite you to look for answers. These answers are often a major idea that is being developed.
8. **Numbering.** Ideas that are numbered are important. When studying these ideas, write them down as a list with a title at the top. This can become your main idea mind map.
9. **Visuals.** Pictures, graphs, diagrams, figures, and other visual materials usually highlight and emphasize main ideas that need to be remembered.
10. **Details.** The use of examples, statistics, and other details (illustrations, tables, charts) always signal that a main idea is being clarified, proven, or developed. The main idea may be ahead or behind these details in the text.
11. **Patterns of Organization:** When the text is organized in a pattern, this signals a main idea. Patterns can include like topics, the comparison of two objects, cause and effect, or problem and solution discussions. When you recognize such a pattern look for the main idea(s).
12. **Summary.** Summaries at the end of the text re-state the main idea in an abbreviated form.

*Remember, when studying your textbook, you are a detective looking for clues to 'What is Important'.*



## When Textbook Reading is Challenging

Textbook reading is typically more difficult than other forms of reading, but sometimes it's downright challenging. If you're faced with reading a challenging textbook, we recommend the following:

- **Read aloud.** Reading aloud improves reading comprehension and retention of information. Reading aloud allows you to hear what you're reading which enables the brain to process the information more effectively and remember what it heard.
- **Change positions.** Reading passages from textbooks gets tedious and boring really fast. Being stuck in the same position the entire time you read only adds to the monotony. Try reading standing up for a while, or change positions every once in a while.
- **Read the text again.** Each time you read a text again you'll pick up something new, retain more information and find it easier to understand. It's not uncommon to read the same passage from a textbook several times before you're able to fully understand and retain the information.
- **Search for key words.** Read sentences removing the adjectives and adverbs. This will cut to the meat of the sentence and help you identify what's being said and what's really important for you to know.
- **Jump around in the text.** Sometimes it's beneficial to skip around and read different parts of a chapter or section in a textbook. For example, jumping to the end of the chapter and reading the chapter summary, before reading the chapter, can greatly enhance focus, direction and understanding as you go back and read the actual chapter.
- **Mark it.** If you come across a passage or section of the text that you just don't understand, underline it and put a mark next it in the margin of your book. When you're done reading your text, you'll have several marks throughout the chapter. Once you get back to class, you'll know what questions to ask your teacher or professor.
- **Take a break.** If you're just not making headway with the text you're reading, take a break, regroup and come back to tackle it later with a fresh pair of eyes.
- **Turn to the web.** When all else fails, "Google" it. The web is a plethora of information. And these days there are websites that address, and lend understanding, to just about every topic or subject.

Source: <https://www.educationcorner.com/textbook-strategies.html>