



Sixth College Academic Advising

SQ4R Method of Study

SQ4R is a method of studying, not reading, a text book. Contrary to popular myth, reading material once is not enough for learning. The keys to learning are organization and repetition, both of which are included in the SQ4R method. "SQ4R" is an acronym for the steps in the method: Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Record, and Review. Information from George Washington University, Academic Success Center <http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/asc/>

SURVEY

Survey the entire chapter by reading the headings and subheadings, observing charts and graphs, reading summaries, and skimming any questions at the end. The survey step provides an organizational overview of the chapter, gives a "mind set" for the job and ultimately saves time.

QUESTION

Ask questions based on the survey. Becoming actively curious about the material aids in concentration, comprehension, and memory.

READ

Read for understanding. Take one major section at a time. (Do not take notes yet.)

RECITE

After reading each section, make a deliberate effort to recall the main points. This is the step most students skip, yet it is critical to retention. After reciting, check in the book for corrections and forgotten points. Try to put things in your own words.

RECORD

Take notes on each section as the Read and Recite steps are complete. The more organized and detailed the notes, the better for mastery of the material. Once again use your own language.

REVIEW

After all sections have been read, recited, and recorded, an overall review of the chapter is needed. This is best accomplished by rereading all notes for the chapter, followed by a deliberate effort to recall the material. This review reminds the student of all material covered, reorganizes the separate sections back into a united whole, allows a check on any material that remains unclear, and helps with retention.

The SQ4R method of study is easy to understand, but can be difficult to put into practice on a regular basis. Try it out! Initially it may seem to take too much time, but time spent studying as assignments are read is time saved when studying for exams. Also, you do not need to follow the steps rigidly; experiment and modify the method to best fit your needs. Students who learn to use SQ4R typically find it to be well worth the effort.