

## What is the Survey Q Three R Method Study?

The Survey Q Three R (SQ3R) method is a means of study, which outlines in concrete form some of the techniques, you have already been using in your study habits, but it adds some techniques, which you may not know. The SQ3R method gives you a definite outline of a study procedure that has proven useful to those who practice it. SQ3R has been developed and experimentally shown to be successful at one of the major universities.

Why is it especially useful? Because it guides you into discovering the important facts and ideas that are contained in an assignment, and then it helps you by showing how you can best master and retain that knowledge, so that you are prepared for an examination.

- **Survey:** Take a minute or two (only) to survey the whole assignment, to find out what it is about as a whole. Look for summaries.
- **Question:** Ask yourself questions based on the text, using boldface headings, such as, in Geology. "Types of Rocks," and turning them into active, questioning sentences, such as, "What are the types of rocks?"
- **Read:** By now you are reading, not passively, but actively, with certain definite questions in mind, and attempting to answer these questions and to organize the material. Read only to the end of each headed section.
- **Recite:** Look away from the assignment and from any notes you have taken, and ask yourself the questions you have already made up. If you can answer them without looking at the book, you know the material at the present time. If you cannot answer them without going back to the material, you should go back and try again.
- **Review:** Review each headed section (briefly) as you complete it, and review later on to keep from forgetting the material. Your understanding of it will be increased too, each time you review. Go back over the material several times, if possible.

*Additional sources of questions:*

- **Charts and graphs.** These are important summaries of material, and you should turn their headings into questions, if possible, or ask yourself questions about them.
- **Italicized phrases.** These the author considers important, and you should too. Ask yourself about them.

Now repeat steps **Question, Read, Recite,** and **Review** on each succeeding headed section. That is, turn the next heading into a question, read to answer that question, and recite the answer, followed by brief review. Read in this way until the entire lesson is completed. Question yourself from the chapter summary also.

Is the SQ3R method an easy way to study? No, it is not. It is an easy technique to understand and to memorize, but it will call for *deliberate effort* on your part to practice these techniques regularly. It will not be easy to learn to apply it, because your old, more passive habits of reading will interfere with the active effort to *study* at first. But, you can learn to apply the SQ3R method successfully, and you will find it rewarding.

### **Errors students make in using the SQ3R method:**

1. *Failing to turn topic headings into questions.* Many students merely glance at the topic headings, or even overlook them, in reading textbooks. Turning headings into questions by beginning with how,

why, where, etc. is an excellent technique to stimulate yourself to think about the content in each section is to ask a question, based on the topic heading, and then attempt to guess the answer before you read. Then read to check your answers.

2. *Taking notes from the book in too much detail.* (See handout on Textbook Marking.) Bulky notes are not useful. Jot down the key words that will convey the main ideas and important details. Don't worry about writing complete sentences. Condense the ideas as succinctly as possible. It will be easier for you to review and recall them then. Writing out the questions you made from topic headings and brief notes will give you a good review test on your understanding and retention.
3. *Failing to use notes for review.* Merely making notes will not help you retain the material unless you attempt to state the ideas in your own words and use your notes systematically for review. Look over your notes and test yourself on them at the end of one week, then two weeks, etc. and again at the time you plan your intensive review for an examination.
4. *Depending on underlining.* Combine it with the review step of SQ3R. Otherwise, you may be postponing understanding.
5. *Believing that using SQ3R takes too much time.* This is a frequent complaint of students exposed to the SQ3R technique. It takes practice to learn it, you can save a great deal of time in the long run, for you will not have to spend hours rereading and redigesting the total text when examination time looms.
6. *Most important, using SQ3R rigidly and mechanically.* Alter the SQ3R technique to suit your needs and the difficulty of the course you are taking. If the course is easy for you and your background knowledge of the subject is good, then you may manage by mentally building and answering and writing down only those notes that you are not able to recall. If the course is difficult, on the other hand, and you must make a good grade, then apply the method as it's outlined. You will need to write notes, and review them frequently, to grasp the new and difficult concepts.

### **Using SQ3R Paragraphs**

*Example:* The sample paragraph below is presented to demonstrate the use of the Survey, Question, and Read portions of the SQ3R method.

#### Causes of the French Revolution

Although it has been argued that the reasons for the French Revolution were as numerous as the roots of a tree, there were probably three basic causes of the revolution. The first cause centers around the merging French middle class' desire to expand its influence within the government. The industrial revolution had created a potent middle class yearning for power. The second reason involved the French peasants. The intolerable conditions under which the nobility forced them, to live made them ripe for revolution. The third had its source in events that happened 3,000 miles away. The recent revolution in the United States quickened within the French with their desires for democracy.

### **Talking with the teacher**

- If you seem to be having trouble with your assignments, check with your professor. He may be able to make some specific suggestions, which will help you in your studying. You may find that the general approaches you have been using are not easily adaptable to the style of a particular text. The professor may be able to help you determine what specific techniques would be of most value. He can help clarify points and relationships that are giving you difficulty.
- Be alert to your needs and check with your teacher before you become bogged down in a wrong approach or interpretation. Be ready to explain your problem with him. Tell him what you have done, what changes you have tried, and what things seem unclear. The more information you can give to him, the better he will be able to assist you. Then try his suggestions. If they help, continue to use them. If they don't then check back with him for more help.