

SQ4R SYSTEM

Adapted from Eileen Lewis

SURVEY

Take an overall survey of your text. Having information about the framework of the chapter(s) will help you discover main ideas, definitions, etc. Look at:

1. **Chapter title** - this contains the chapter's main idea.
2. **Chapter objectives** - specific statement of what information you should get from studying the chapter.
3. **Chapter summary or review** - if you look at this first, you will know which concepts to concentrate on as you read.
4. **Major headings and subheadings** - the skeleton of the chapter provides you with an outline for the material to be covered.
5. **Visuals** - these add spice to your reading, creating interest and often restate basic information in visual form. Pay attention to any material that has been offset in a box or separate section (graphs, pictures, examples, etc.).
6. **Special treatment of words and terms** - offset, highlighted, and boldfaced.

Once you have completed the survey, you are ready to begin the note-taking process of the SQ4R System.

QUESTION

By asking a question before and during your reading, you are forced to pay attention and search for answers, therefore concentrating more during your reading session, aiding in memory and recall.

1. **Reword the first heading into a question.**
Example: Textbook Heading – Origin of Magma
Question – What is the origin of magma?
2. **Write this question** in your notes

READ

Begin reading the first section of the chapter. As you finish reading the first paragraph, decide if your question has been answered. If not, you will probably want to add a question to your notes covering the information in that first paragraph. Continue reading the section and revise your initial question, making it more or less specific.

Example: Initial Question: What is the origin of magma?

Revised Questions: How does heat generate magma?

How does pressure affect magma creation?

How do volatiles affect magma creation?

Continue reading the remainder of the section and chapter in this manner: **asking questions, revising questions, and finding answers to your questions.**

Notice that these questions actually will begin to resemble exam questions. This is an advantage of the SQ4R System since it aids in predicting possible exam questions from the textbook.

RECITE

Once you have finished reading a section, **answer the question you have written out loud.** If you cannot remember the answer, glance back at the text, reread the information, and recite the answer. Translate the author's words into your own whenever possible. Reciting out loud involves additional senses and therefore aids in moving information from short-term memory to long-term memory.

REVIEW

Before ending your study session, take a few minutes to do an **immediate review.** This involves looking over your notes again and covering the "answers" column in your notes and answering the questions you have written **out loud.** Use this method for an on-going review.

REFLECT

Expand the depth and breadth of your understanding. **Ask how the information is relevant** to you and how it might be relevant to society at large. Evaluate how the information fits in with and/or differs from your previous beliefs. Think about whether any of the information might be controversial and why. **Synthesize the information** with other knowledge by asking how it relates to the course, over all, and how it can be related to other subjects and issues. **Write down new questions or ideas** that are inspired by what you have read.