Improving Classroom Reading: How SQ3R Works

Survey
Try to become familiar with the organization and general content of the material you are to read.

1. Check the title first to get an idea of what the material is about.
2. Read the lead-in or introduction.
3. Pay attention to headings and subheadings. They can help you get an overall picture of the author's plan.
4. Look at charts, pictures, graphs, and other illustrative material. Check the captions under each. These can also help give you clues to the overall plan.
5. Quickly read any headnotes, introductory paragraphs, and summary sections. They can give you a better overview.
6. Read the end-of-chapter questions.

Question
This is the crucial stage in personalizing the assignment, making it really yours.

On a separate sheet of paper, write down questions that you can answer as you read. What might the author be able to tell you about the topic that you don't already know? What are you curious about here? Sometimes, turning the headings and subheadings into questions helps.

Read
Read the material section by section. As you read, look for the answer to the question(s) you formed.

1. Skim the less important points.
2. Keep asking yourself: What is the author's main purpose in writing this material?
3. Add to your personal list of questions if you need to.
4. Add difficult words to your question sheet so that you can verify the meanings later.

Recite
After you finish each section, stop. Check to see if you can answer your question(s) for the section. If you can't, look back to find the answer. Then check your recall again. Be sure to complete this step after you read each section.

Review
When you have finished the whole reading assignment, go back to each heading; recall your question(s) and try to answer it. If you can't recall the answer, be sure to look back and find the answer. Then test yourself again.
Factors That Influence Reading Rate

TEXT CHARACTERISTICS:
- Writing style
- Vocabulary
- Sentence length
- Complexity of ideas and concepts

READER’S CHARACTERISTICS: Your...
- Vocabulary level
- Comprehension ability
- Physical state
- Background knowledge
- Interest in the material
- State of mind

READER’S PURPOSE:
Generally a person must read slower when reading a textbook to maintain high comprehension and high recall.

Reading for pleasure -- 250-400 WPM moderate comprehension
Reading for a test -- 150-250 WPM high comprehension/high recall
Reading for a specific fact -- above 600 WPM

Textbook Underlining and Marking
- Read first; then underline and mark.
- Use headings to identify main ideas to underline.
- As you identify and underline main ideas, look for important facts that support the main idea and underline them too.
- Do not underline complete sentences. Only underline enough key words and phrases so that it still makes sense when you review.
- Mark the right amount -- not too much, not too little.
- Develop a consistent system -- circling, asterisks, colors.
- Underline accurately.
- Make your underlining and marking understandable for review.

OTHER TEXTBOOK REVIEW METHODS
- Outlining
- Summarizing
- Skimming
- Scanning

Adapted from College Reading and Study Skills by Kathleen McWhorter, 1992, Harper Collins.
From: The Student Success Center Resource File SSC2009