

**Subject Area:** Study Skills and Learning Strategies

**Grade Level:** 3-12

**Instructional Method:** SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review)

**Description:**

SQ3R is a method used in classrooms to help students understand text from textbooks. It breaks textbook reading down in to five easy-to-follow steps:

- Survey-Gather the information necessary to focus and formulate goals.
  - This step includes reading the title, reading the introduction and summary. Look for boldface headings and subheadings. Skim through the reading to look for any pictures or charts. Read any chapter questions before reading the text.
- Question-Help your mind engage and concentrate.
  - Use boldface headings to think of possible questions that may be answered in the text. While reading more questions can be added.
- Read- Fill in the information around the mental structures you've been building.
  - Read through the text to answer questions previously formulated.
- Recite-Retrain your mind to concentrate and learn as it reads.
  - After each section stop and think about the questions. Have they been answered? Try to answer the questions without looking back on previously read text.
- Review-Refine your mental organization and begin building memory.
  - Once the entire text is completed evaluate all previously written questions and make sure they have been answered. If needed, review the text.


**Conditions:**

- Especially beneficial for upper elementary classrooms.
- Consider the reading level of students before using. Students are most successful when they have decoding skills.
- Most successful when each letter of the acronym is thoroughly explained and practiced.
- Most useful with content area textbooks that require large amounts of reading.

**Examples:**

Examples were taken from <http://www.indiana.edu/~l517/SQ3R.htm>

Suppose your students were going to be reading a text called, "The Life of an Ant." The text might include the following subheadings and introductory sentences:

<p><b>The Life of an Ant</b></p> <p><b>Finding Sugar</b> Ants like sweet-tasting food. .... ..... .....</p> <p><b>Using Their Feelers</b> Ants can't make sounds, but they can still talk to one another..... ..... .....</p> <p><b>Living in an Ant Nest</b> Ant nests are very impressive..... ..... .....</p>	
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After surveying the text, the student would turn the title, headings, and introductory sentences into questions and write them down in the left-hand column of a table. Then, while reading, the student would look for answers to those questions. Each answer would be written down in the right-hand column next to its question:

<b>The Life of an Ant</b>	
<u>Questions</u>	<u>Answers</u>
<i>How do ants find sugar?</i>	<b>When an ant finds sugar, leaves a trail to the sugar that other ants can smell. That way, the other ants can follow the trail back to the sugar.</b>
<i>Do all ants like sweet tasting food?</i>	<b>Many do. But some ants eat the dead bodies of other insects. And others eat grass.</b>
<i>Why do ants touch each other with their feelers?</i>	<b>This is how ants communicate with one another.</b>
<i>What do ants "say" to one another?</i>	<b>Ants can let each other know where food is.</b>
<i>What do ants do in their nests?</i>	<b>They take care of eggs and feed baby ants. The queen lays eggs.</b>
<i>Why are ants' nests so impressive?</i>	<b>It has many rooms and lots of tunnels.</b>

When the student has finished reading, he or she would read each question and answer out loud. Then, a day, a week, and several weeks later, that students would review both the questions and answers.

## References:

1. Cook Counseling Center. (2000). Increasing textbook comprehension by using SQ3R. Retrieved August, 26, 07, from [www.ucc.vt.edu/lynch/textbookreading.htm](http://www.ucc.vt.edu/lynch/textbookreading.htm)
2. Huber, J.A.. (2004). A closer look at SQ3R. *Reading Improvement* 41(2). Retrieved August, 27, 07 from EBSCO.
3. Indiana University. (2006). Instructional reading strategy: SQ3R. Retrieved August, 26, 07, from <http://www.indiana.edu/~l517/SQ3R.htm>
4. Landsberger, J. (2007). Study guides and strategies: The SQ3R reading method. Retrieved August, 25, 07, from [www.studygs.net](http://www.studygs.net)

## “How To”

- Explain what the acronym SQ3R stands for and what each letter stands for.
- Explain the pros and cons of this method and why it is useful to the students.
- Using an example, show the students how to apply this strategy.
- Clarify when the SQ3R method is appropriate to use. (Useful for textbooks that require a large intake of information.)
- Give reading assignments to the students, and practice this strategy with them.
- Use scaffolding to help the students to reach an independent level

## Implications:

### Pros

- Useful method for subjects such as biology, psychology, and sociology which demands a large intake of information.
- Useful when trying to understand challenging material.
- Good organizational tool especially for students with learning disabilities.
- Breaks lengthy text into shorter chunks which helps students better understand the reading.
- Can be applied to lectures when taking notes.

### Cons

- Less effective for textbooks involving problem solving such as math.
- Not useful for foreign language textbooks which focus on vocabulary.
- Not useful for English novels when the focus is on comprehending the “big picture.”
- Can be time consuming.

### Other considerations:

- The SQ3R method may need to be taught step by step especially when teaching students with special needs.
- The method may take weeks to implement.
- Teachers should be cautious when selecting reading material for this method.

### **Additional Links/ References**

- American Association of School Administrators in Arlington, VA. (1995). Brush up your study skills; Tips for students and parents. Retrieved August, 27, 07, from <http://www.library.eiu.edu/welcome.html>
- Congos, D. H. (). SQ3R textbook study system. Retrieved August 26, 07, from <http://www.sarc.sdes.ucf.edu/ss16.pdf>
- Robinson, Francis Pleasant (1970). Effective study (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York; Harper & Row
- Wilhelm, J.D. Baker, T.D. & Dube, J. (2001). Strategic Reading: Guiding Students to Lifelong Literacy. Portsmouth, NH Boynton/Cook.

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