

Learning Skills: Textbook Strategies

Reading a textbook is not easy, and it may not be a highly motivating, exciting experience. Textbooks contain unfamiliar vocabulary, often written with long, complicated sentences.

SQR5 Method of Using Texts

Skim over the text

- What chapters are you using for this course?
- What readings do you need to complete this week?

Question

- Use chapter objectives or questions provided by the instructor or author
 - Make up questions about the terminology and headings
 - Use a variety of verbs (e.g., how/explain/where) in your questions
 - Include compare and contrast questions

Read to find the answers to the questions

- Have a page in the back of your binder or organizer for terms & definitions
- Use the name index at the back of the text to answer questions about people
- Try a timeline for dates or chronologies

Reread paragraph by paragraph or section by section

- Take notes on main ideas *after* you've read the whole section
- Mark or highlight your text sparingly: no more than 15-25% of any one page
 - Only mark the key words, important questions or concepts
 - If the margins are large enough, write these in for study aids
 - If a heading says there are 5 items or objectives, then mark and # each

Recite

- Paraphrase important information in your own words, out loud
- Try to teach the main ideas to someone else

Rewrite

- Use tables, outlines, flow charts, hierarchies, timelines or webs

Review

- Test yourself with your own questions
- Use any online resources provided