

Reading Difficult Material

PSQ3R Method for Reading

Purpose, Survey, Question, Read, Record, Review

Purpose

- What is the reason you are reading the chapter, book, or article?
- What are you looking for: the theme, main idea, important facts, evidence, arguments, or examples?
- When your purpose is clear, you can read far more effectively and efficiently.

Survey

- Glance over the main features of the chapter or article. Note: author, title, headings, first paragraph, last paragraph, references and any charts or illustrations.
- Skimming should give you an idea about the subject.
- This survey should only take a few minutes, but is extremely important.

Question

- Make up questions before you read, based on your survey.
- Turn headings into questions and trigger curiosity.

Read

- Read to find the answers to your questions.
- Look for ideas, information, evidence, arguments that will meet your purpose.

Record

- Answers to questions should be brief.
- Write them down.
- Use key words, abbreviations, and symbols.

Review

- Survey your reduced notes and see them as a whole.
- You may need to rewrite or reorganize the information.
- Keep these notes separate and review often.

Additional Tips

1. Read It Again

Very important if reading technical information or new information.

Read it again before going to sleep. Your mind may continue to work on sorting concepts.

2. Look For Key Words

Mentally cross out all the descriptive words and read the sentence in its “bare” form.

Key words are usually nouns and verbs.

Highlight, underline, or jot down key words.

3. Do A Mini-Review

At the end of each paragraph, recite (in your own words) what you have read.

Write a summary in the margin of the text or on paper.

4. Read Aloud

Imagine that you are the author, and that you are reading it to someone else.

Read with great expression and inflection.

5. Explain Aloud

Pretend that you understand it and explain it aloud (often we know more than we think).

Explaining something often helps us to work logically through a problem.

6. Find Alternatives

Access library resources.

Look for an overview of the subject.

7. Get On Your Feet

Changing positions fights off fatigue.

Try pacing as you read aloud.

8. Get Help

If you still do not understand the material. Find someone who does (instructor, tutor, classmate) and ask for help.