

A KEY TO EFFECTIVE READING

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A number of effective study techniques have been developed and studied by educational psychologists. One useful technique is known as the PQRST method (Preview, Question, Read, State, Turn Back). This technique is also known as the SQRRR method (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review).

Survey or preview the material first. Before reading the material, make a quick survey of the material. If it's a chapter in a book, take special note of the chapter heading. Go through the chapter, page by page, getting an idea of what the chapter is about. Take careful note of the bold-faced type. Look at the titles and italicized words. Look at the graphs and pictures, as well as the captions under them. Try to understand them. You may find that you don't completely understand what you are previewing, but you'll gain familiarity with what the writer considers important. At the end of the chapter, you should be able to answer a few general questions about the chapter.

Turn the headings into questions. Look at the bold-faced headings that introduce the sections of the chapter. Read the heading carefully. Now change what it says into a question. Look away from the book and ask questions on what you'd expect to find in the assignment. You don't have to know much about the subject to ask questions. Questioning gets you actively involved in your reading by creating an anticipatory cognitive set that facilitates the learning process.

Read the section of material. After you have formed the question, read the paragraph or section that is included under the bold-faced type. Carefully read the parts of the paragraphs that answer the question you asked. Focus on ideas, not words. Vary your rate of speed depending on your purpose, your familiarity with the subject, and the difficulty of the material. Read with a red pen or highlighter. Feel free to underline, make brief comments in the

margins, or write questions that challenge the author. Notice connections with other things you've learned.

Recite or state in your own words. After you are sure you know the answer to the question you formed from the bold-faced type, look away from the book and ask yourself the question again. Can you answer it? If you can, go on to the next section. If you cannot, go back and look at the answers and try again. After you've finished reading, state in your own words what you have read. If the chapter is very long, make statements about a few pages at a time.

Think through what you state. Thinking through the material is a very important step and probably the most overlooked. Most experts recommend spending two-thirds of study time in stating, reflecting, and reciting the material. Few experts advise spending less than one-half the total time on this step. A short review immediately after a learning period can increase your chance of recall by almost 50%.

Turn back and review the material. When you've finished the entire chapter in this manner take a little break. Then go over the chapter again by asking yourself the same questions that you formed earlier. Can you still answer them? If not, review again. Read the material more selectively. If, after you read the first few words in a paragraph, you seem to recall what will follow, then skip it and go on to the next paragraph. Now is the time for making notes in outline form, and in your own words--with the book closed (if possible).

Remember, it is not enough to understand the PQRST method. You must practice it frequently when studying.

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