

## The SQ3R Reading Technique

This useful reading technique, developed by Francis Robinson (1970), helps you to approach scientific texts effectively and to draw the information you need from them. It is easy to remember and covers five consecutive steps:

**Survey:** Before reading in depth, skim selected parts of the text to get an overview. Orient yourself with the title, the abstract, the headings, the introduction, the chapter summaries, the conclusion, and any other structural text components (images, tables, boxes, etc.). If you have a large pile of books or technical articles to read, you can use this step to sort them according to what is important and what is not.

**Question:** Based on your own prior knowledge, ask questions about the text. What do you want to know? What do you need for your work? What content does the text need to cover in order for it to be useful for your purposes? Formulate these questions in writing before you read and return to them as you read to see if you can find the answers. The questions are not only important for approaching the text actively, but also for reading selectively and extracting from the text exactly what is of interest to you.

**Read:** Read the text section by section and annotate the most important parts—underline, write notes in the margins, etc. Stay focused: annotate only what's relevant to your guiding questions.

**Recite:** Go through the text again, section by section, and write out the most important information in your own words. Only copy whole sentences that you later want to use as a direct quotation and mark them clearly as quotations in your excerpt (i.e., your summary of the text you have read) so that you know later which phrases are yours and which are not. Be sure to note the page numbers!

**Review:** Now, summarize the content of the entire text you have read in a few sentences. Your previously formulated questions should serve as your orientation.

### Literature:

Kruse, Otto: *Lesen und Schreiben. Der richtige Umgang mit Texten im Studium.* Vienna 2010, p. 36.

Robinson, Francis Pleasant: *Effective Study.* 4th Edition. New York 1970.

Wolfsberger, Judith: *Frei geschrieben. Mut, Freiheit und Strategie für wissenschaftliche Abschlussarbeiten.* 3rd Edition. Vienna 2010, p. 131.

Worksheet concept: Goethe University Frankfurt a. M. Writing Center.



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