



SQ3R

Increasing Your Retention of Written Information

SQ3R is a useful technique for fully absorbing written information. It helps you to create a good mental framework of a subject, into which you can fit facts correctly. It helps you to set study goals. It also prompts you to use the review techniques that will help to fix information in your mind.

By using SQ3R to actively read content, you can get the maximum benefit from your reading time.

The acronym SQ3R stands for the five sequential techniques you should use to read content:

Survey

Survey the document: scan the contents, introduction, chapter introductions and chapter summaries to pick up a shallow overview of the text. Form an opinion of whether it will be of any help. If it does not give you the information you want, discard it.

Question

Make a note of any questions on the subject that come to mind, or particularly interest you following your survey. Perhaps scan the document again to see if any stand out. These questions can be considered almost as study goals – understanding the answers can help you to structure the information in your own mind.

Read

Now read the document. Read through useful sections in detail, taking care to understand all the points that are relevant. In the case of some texts this reading may be very slow. This will particularly be the case if there is a lot of dense and complicated information. While you are reading, it can help to take notes in **Mind Map** format.

Recall

Once you have read appropriate sections of the document, run through it in your mind several times. Isolate the core facts or the essential processes behind the subject, and then see how other information fits around them.

Review

Once you have run through the exercise of recalling the information, you can move on to the stage of reviewing it. This review can be by reading the document again, by expanding your notes, or by discussing the material with colleagues. A particularly effective method of reviewing information is to have to teach it to someone else.

If you use SQ3R, you will significantly improve the quality of your study time.



Med School Tips: from a 2013 upper classman

- *Save 15 minutes a day by bringing your meals with you to school.
- *Take "little" breaks and if you have time, bring your tennis shoes and go for a run.
- *NEVER stay up the night before an exam all night / morning. Your body needs sleep to do well and retain information the day of the exam.
- *Don't break your routine on Exam Day: If you normally drink coffee, then drink coffee. If you don't normally drink coffee, then don't drink coffee.
- *Don't isolate yourself; make a friend in medical school. This will provide a support system to help you get through those stressful times.
- *Do not procrastinate; try to stay ahead of the game. Take advantage of any free time you might have to send off an email, make a phone call, etc.
- *Accept the fact that medical school is your life, and you will not have time to watch movies, read the newspaper, etc.
- *Don't feel pressured to join every single club, and don't feel bad about telling people "No" when it comes to joining clubs or participating in extra-curricular school activities.

How to Improve Your Memory

A strong memory depends on the health and vitality of your brain.

Harnessing the power of your brain

They say that you can't teach an old dog new tricks, but when it comes to the brain, scientists have discovered that this old adage simply isn't true. The human brain has an astonishing ability to adapt and change—even into old age. This ability is known as *neuroplasticity*. With the right stimulation, your brain can form new neural pathways, alter existing connections, and adapt and react in ever-changing ways.

Improving memory tip 1: Don't skip on exercise or sleep

Improving memory tip 2: Make time for friends and fun

- *Laugh at yourself.
- *When you hear laughter, move toward it.
- *Spend time with fun, playful people.
- *Surround yourself with reminders to lighten up.
- *Pay attention to children and emulate them.

Improving memory tip 3: Keep stress in check

*Stress is one of the brain's worst enemies. Over time, if left unchecked, chronic stress destroys brain cells and damages the hippocampus, the region of the brain involved in the formation of new memories and the retrieval of old ones.

Improving memory tip 4: Bulk up on brain-boosting foods

Try to "eat a rainbow each day"

*Get your omega-3s

More and more evidence indicates that omega-3 fatty acids are particularly beneficial for brain health. Fish is a particularly rich source of omega-3, especially cold water "fatty fish" such as salmon, tuna, halibut, trout, mackerel, sardines, and herring. In addition to boosting brainpower, eating fish may also lower your risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. **If you're not a fan of fish, consider turning to fish oil supplements. Other non-fish sources of omega-3s include** walnuts, ground flaxseed, flaxseed oil, pumpkin seeds, and soybeans.

*Limit saturated fat.

Research shows that diets high in saturated fat increase your risk of dementia and impair concentration and memory. The primary sources of saturated fat are animal products: red meat, whole milk, butter, cheese, sour cream, and ice cream.

*Eat more fruit and vegetables.

Produce is packed with antioxidants, substances that protect your brain cells from damage. Colorful fruits and vegetables are particularly good antioxidant superfood sources. Try leafy green vegetables such as spinach, broccoli, romaine lettuce, Swiss chard, and arugula, and fruit such as apricots, mangoes, cantaloupe, and watermelon.

*Drink wine (or grape juice) in moderation.

Keeping your alcohol consumption in check is key, since alcohol kills brain cells. But in moderation (around 1 glass a day for women; 2 for men), alcohol may actually improve memory and cognition. Red wine appears to be the best option, as it is rich in resveratrol, a flavonoid that boosts blood flow in the brain and reduces the risk of Alzheimer's disease. Other resveratrol-packed options include grape juice, cranberry juice, fresh grapes and berries, and peanuts.

For mental energy, choose complex carbohydrates

Information on "How to Improve Your Memory" came from:
http://www.helpguide.org/life/improving_memory.htm

Use mnemonic devices to make memorization easier

Mnemonics (the initial “m” is silent) are clues of any kind that help us remember something, usually by helping us associate the information we want to remember with a visual image, a sentence, or a word.

Mnemonic device	Technique	Example
Visual image	Associate a visual image with a word or name to help you remember them better. Positive, pleasant images that are vivid, colorful, and three dimensional will be easier to remember.	To remember the name Rosa Parks and what she’s known for, picture a woman sitting on a park bench surrounded by roses, waiting as her bus pulls up.
Acrostic (or sentence)	Make up a sentence in which the first letter of each word is part of or represents the initial of what you want to remember.	The sentence “Every good boy does fine” to memorize the lines of the treble clef, representing the notes E, G, B, D, and F.
Acronym	An acronym is a word that is made up by taking the first letters of all the key words or ideas you need to remember and creating a new word out of them.	The word “HOMES” to remember the names of the Great Lakes: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior.
Rhymes and alliteration	Rhymes, alliteration (a repeating sound or syllable), and even jokes are a memorable way to remember more mundane facts and figures.	The rhyme “Thirty days hath September, April, June, and November” to remember the months of the year with only 30 days in them.
Chunking	Chunking breaks a long list of numbers or other types of information into smaller, more manageable chunks.	Remembering a 10-digit phone number by breaking it down into three sets of numbers: 555-867-5309 (as opposed to 5558675309).
Method of loci	Imagine placing the items you want to remember along a route you know well or in specific locations in a familiar room or building.	For a shopping list, imagine bananas in the entryway to your home, a puddle of milk in the middle of the sofa, eggs going up the stairs, and bread on your bed.

Long-term memory

Long-term memory involves the information you make an effort (conscious or unconscious) to retain because it’s:

- *Personally meaningful to you (for example, information about family and friends)
- *You need it (such as job procedures or material you’re studying for a test).
- *Or it made an emotional impression on you (a move that had you riveted, the first time you ever caught a fish, the day your uncle died).
- *Make it meaningful and use SQ3R to enhance this.

Procedural Memory: involves skills and routines you perform so often that they don’t require conscious recall.

Also:

- * 3 x 5 cards – Make them yourself
- * Don’t Google everything – follow professor-assigned course content

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