

WHEN TO USE SQ3R

No technique is useful 100% of the time. Now that you've learned another study strategy, it is important to decide when to use it. Different study strategies work best in different situations.

SQ3R is useful with many textbooks but for which ones is it less likely to be useful?

SQ3R is probably less useful with textbooks that focus on helping you solve problems. For instance, it may not be useful to employ SQ3R with math textbooks. In this case, the main emphasis of reading the chapter is on helping you solve problems. Focusing your energy on solving mathematical problems using the information in the chapter is probably a better use of your time. Two other types of textbooks for which SQ3R may be less useful is beginning foreign language texts or texts for English class. The focus of beginning foreign language texts is often vocabulary, verb tense and sentence construction. Books for English class may be novels and the purpose of reading may be focused more on the "big picture" than on the content of a particular section or chapter.

Now that you know when NOT to use SQ3R, when should you use it?

SQ3R is an excellent technique to use with textbooks that provide a lot of information and require you to learn the material in depth. Textbooks in many disciplines such as biology, psychology, and sociology fall into this category.

Does it matter how the professor uses the textbook in class?

If your professor is reviewing a lot of material from the textbook for his/her class lectures, it is probably well worth your time to read the chapters using the SQ3R method. If your professor uses the textbook as a supplement or reference to class lectures, you will need to balance the amount of time that would be taken to read the chapters using the SQ3R method versus spending your study time solving problems, reviewing notes or doing other class homework assignments.

ACTION PLAN

Now that you've learned about SQ3R, survey, question, read, recite and review, the next step is to incorporate this into your study strategies. You may want to begin by selecting one class for which you will use SQ3R to read every chapter prior to your next test. Here are some additional strategies you may want to implement along with reading the chapter using this method:

- Plan ahead and start early. SQ3R takes time and is not a strategy that can be employed or used effectively the night before a test.
- Plan to read each chapter before it's discussed in class. Doing this will make the class lecture a review. It is also likely to help you to understand the material that is presented in class at a deeper level.
- Identify information in the chapter you don't understand and plan to talk with the professor after class or during his/her office hours if you still don't understand the material after it's covered in class.

Adapted from: Robinson, Francis Pleasant, (1961, 1970) *Effective study* (4th ed.), Harper & Row, New York, NY.