READING TEXTBOOKS can be a huge drain on your time and energy if you try to read every word. Reading strategically can save you time and help you learn.

TIPS

- Pay attention to titles, subtitles and headings. They often provide clues that allow you to grasp key concepts and organize ideas.
- Create practice test questions as you read. This is much more effective than highlighting.
- Choose the best approach based on the type of information you need: **scan** to find a particular piece of information; **skim** to find the most important information as quickly as possible; **focus** to find specific or detailed information.
- Read in-depth to fully understand the content.

SELF-REFLECTION

- How do the concepts covered in a section or chapter connect with previous readings or lectures?
- What does your instructor reference the most: textbooks, articles, web sources? Which format is easiest for you to understand?
- Which memory strategy works best for you (mnemonics, concept maps, self-tests)?

MAIN POINTS

**SQ3R: Survey + Scan**

Survey how the readings connect to your course outline.

- Is the textbook a primary source for the course? If so, read it thoroughly.
- If the textbook is secondary to lecture notes, focus mainly on the first three steps: survey–question–read.
- Ask yourself what you already know about this topic. What concepts would you like to learn more about?

Scan the headings and objectives in the assigned chapters/articles. Look for these key terms:

- chapter glossary
- summaries
- self-tests

**SQ3R: Questions**

Ask Questions:

While scanning your textbook, create questions based on the headings and objectives.
• Have a notebook handy while you read to take notes and jot down questions. Writing things down by hand is one of the best ways to learn.

Write down the answers to your questions as you read and learn more.

**SQ3R: Read**

Read selectively:

• Identify which areas you need to concentrate on, either because your instructor has emphasized the importance of certain concepts/chapters, or because you feel like your knowledge in that area is lacking.
• Read a section and then take notes, sometimes called the “chunking method.”
• Your notes should be a study tool – like flashcards – which prompt you for the answers. Focus on important concepts and leave out the small details.

**SQ3R: Recall and Review**

Recall: Take a few minutes to recall what you’ve just read; see if you can write a short summary paragraph.

Review: Look over the notes you’ve taken or the parts you’ve highlighted. Review the questions you created and see if you can answer them.

• If you still have unanswered questions after you have finished your readings, bring those questions to class and ask your instructor for clarification.