**SQ4R: A Classic Method for Studying Texts**

**S = Survey, Skim, Scan**

* Read all the titles and subtitles.
* Study any pictures, charts or graphs, **bold** print, or *italicized text.*
* Read the summary and the conclusion at the end of the chapter and any study questions.

Surveying a chapter in this way gives you the "big picture,"; a framework of the main ideas which will help to hold the details together later.

**Q = Question: Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?**

* Before beginning to read, take the subtitle of the section (or the first sentence of a paragraph) and turn it into a question.

For example, if you're reading part of a chapter called "Functions of the Spinal Cord," ask yourself, "What are the functions of the spinal cord?"

**R#1 = Read**

* **Actively read** with the purpose to answer your questions.
  + Don’t read passively, sliding your eyes over the words
  + Be cautious, however, that you don't end up skimming for the answer to your question and missing other important information.
* Look for transitional words that point to the main idea, major and minor details.
  + Remember the green and yellow cards!!

**R#2 = Respond**

* Once you've read the section, close the textbook and answer your questions **in your own words**.
* Write the question on one side of your paper and the answer on the other.
* If you can't answer the question, you should reread that section until you can.
  + If, after several tries, you still can't answer your question, go on to the next few sections and see if things become clearer.
  + You may find that you need to change your question. For example, you may have first posed the question, "What is the Treaty of Versailles?" for the subtitle "The Treaty of Versailles," but, after reading the section, you may find that a better question is, ";Why was the Treaty of Versailles created?"
  + If changing your question doesn't help clarify the reading, it's time to get some help. Your instructor or tutor in the Learning Assistance Center is good places to start.

**R#3 = Record**

* Once you've understood the material and can summarize it in your own words, the next step is to record the information in some way.
  + Highlight and/or mark the text.
  + Take notes, or annotate the text or some combination of both. Whichever method or combination of methods you choose (some pros and cons are summarized next), it's critical to remember to read and understand the material **first**, and then go back and record.

**Highlighting**

**The Pros**

* Takes less time than note taking.
* Charts and graphs from text readily available.

**The Cons**

* Very easy to do badly; can fool you into thinking you're learning material when what you're really doing is coloring.
* Tendency to mark too much to avoid missing something important; experts say highlight 10-15%; students usually highlight 70-80%.
* Because fragments of sentences are highlighted, tendency is to read whole sentence for complete meaning and so most of the book ends up being re-read.
* Necessary to study for tests from heavy, clumsy textbook.
* Difficult to integrate with lecture notes.
* Textbook ends up looking very used and reduces resale value.

**Notetaking**

**The Pros**

* Because it's time consuming, encourages you to be concise and more selective of important information.
* Information is in point form but still grammatically complete.
* Provides a portable, easy-to-manage study tool — text not often needed for studying.
* Condensed study notes can be made in margins as you go, saving time when preparing for exams.
* Easy to integrate text and lecture notes if done on looseleaf paper.

**The Cons**

* Time-consuming.
* Tendency to copy text rather than take notes in your own words.

**R#4 = Review**

* In courses where there is a lot of factual material to remember, a regular review period (usually once a week) can be a very effective strategy for retaining information. Integrating a weekly review period into your study routine will help you remember more of the information longer, thereby changing the nature of the studying done at exam time. Rather than relearning material that has been forgotten because you haven't looked at it since reading it or writing it down, preparing for an exam can include a review of familiar material and rehearsal strategies like trying old exams.

The secret to making regular review periods effective is to start **from the beginning** of the course in each review session. The volume of material to review increases as the semester progresses, but the amount of time needed to review older material decreases. After you've reviewed the first week's material a few times, it will take only minutes to skim over it and recall the key points.

Adapted from http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/assistance/learning\_services/handouts/SQ4R.cfm