# How to Use the SQ4R Reading Method

When reading for academic purposes, the overall goal is to extract the most important information from a text and make connections to the material with which you are presented. One means for identifying and making connections with your readings is through the SQ4R method.

| Before you read, Survey your text... | ✓ Look to your reading’s title, headings, and subheadings  
|                                          | ✓ Scan the introduction and conclusion of the text  
|                                          | ✓ Pay attention to pictures, charts, graphs, or maps (and their captions)  
|                                          | ✓ Skim any review or study questions |
| Ask Questions while you are surveying... | ✓ Turn the text’s title, headings, and/or subheadings into questions; for example, the heading “Critical Social Work” could be turned into “What is Critical Social Work?”  
|                                          | ✓ Ask yourself, "What did or might my instructor say about this chapter?” or “How does this piece of writing relate to my field of study/placement?” |
| When you begin to Read... | ✓ Note all the underlined, italicized, or bolded words or phrases  
|                                          | ✓ Study visual aids  
|                                          | ✓ Reduce speed for difficult passages; re-read and begin to paraphrase  
|                                          | ✓ Answer questions at the beginning or end of chapters  
|                                          | ✓ Look for answers to the questions you raised earlier |
| Respond to your questions... | ✓ Close your reading and attempt to answer the questions you posed earlier  
|                                          | ✓ Reread the section (or seek alternate resources) if you cannot answer the questions you raised |
| Record your responses... | ✓ Summarize answers to your questions in your own words  
|                                          | ✓ Your responses can later be turned into cue cards and other study aids  
|                                          | ✓ Consistently asking and responding to questions and recording your answers means that when it comes time to prepare for a test or exam, you can review your questions and answers instead of the full text |
| Review: an ongoing process... | ✓ Have a regular review period (usually once a week); this is an effective strategy for retaining information and building on your knowledge  
|                                          | ✓ 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 materials decreases  
|                                          | ✓ Continue to pose higher-order questions to deepen your understanding and interpret texts critically |

These are valuable resources related to critical reading (including those adapted for this handout):

- University of Guelph Learning Commons. *SQ4R studying.* Retrieved from [http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/get-assistance/studying/effective-studying/sq4r-studying](http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/get-assistance/studying/effective-studying/sq4r-studying)