

Be AGILE Strategy: Reading Actively

What does it mean to read actively?

This may seem like a strange concept on the surface, since reading itself is an activity. Reading actively, though, is much more intentional: it's about reading with purpose. This approach involves making meaning of the reading, and taking specific steps during the reading process.

What are the benefits?

Have you ever read an assigned chapter or article, and upon finishing it you say to yourself, "I have no idea what I just read!"? This is a common experience, and a huge waste of time! Reading actively will save you time. Just as importantly, it'll increase your memory of the reading, your understanding of the material, and your overall learning by helping you make connections as you read.

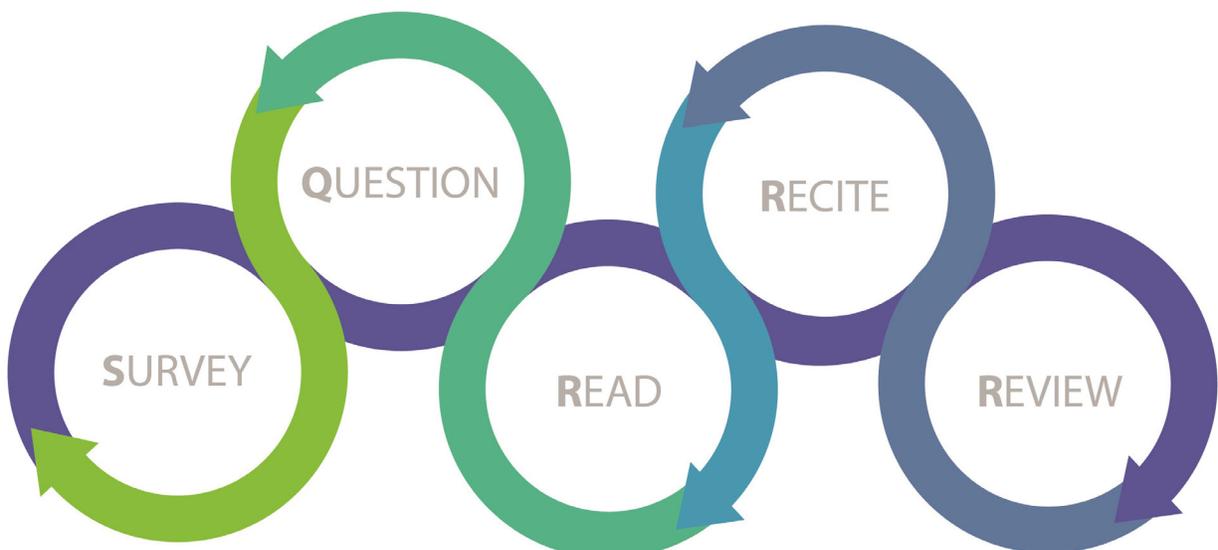
Are there any related technologies?

If you're reading on an electronic device, it can be very helpful to use an application such as Notable, which allows you to make notes on the document as you're reading.

Where can I get more information?

Visit our website, usm.maine.edu/AGILE, for more detailed information on the SQ3R method. For examples of annotated bibliographies, you may want to visit the Purdue Online Writing Lab site (owl.purdue.edu).

SQ3R Method



How do I use this approach?

Before you even begin the reading process, take a moment to ask yourself, “Why was this reading assigned?” Your professors select readings intentionally, with specific content and concepts to be covered. By understanding the context or the “why”, the brain will already be looking for the most relevant information. If reading an article or chapter as part of your own research or writing process, ask yourself, “What is it I need to find from this source? How is it connected to my research question or the main idea of my paper?”

As you start to read, consider using the SQ3R method, a tried-and-true approach for efficiently tackling college-level material. SQ3R stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review.

- **Survey:** Take a moment to survey the chapter or article.
- **Question:** During the surveying process, ask yourself some questions. You would have already asked yourself, “Why was this reading assigned?”
- **Read:** Begin to read, with the goal of a few paragraphs or one section at a time. Search for the answers to your questions as you go along.
- **Review:** Once you’ve arrived at the end of the chapter or article, take just a few moments to review. Use your own words to summarize the most important aspects of the reading, and remind yourself why it is important to the course and your overall learning.

What does it mean to be AGILE?

We want to help you, as a USM student, avoid common learning challenges, and instead increase your memory, understanding, and academic performance. These strategies will involve self-testing, active practice, making connections between ideas, all of which will maximize your academic time both inside and outside of the classroom.

The mantra we want you to remember is: “Be an AGILE learner” (Academic Gains through Improved Learning Effectiveness).

At first, some of these approaches may seem like “more work”, but that’s normal! Any time we try a new behavior with any area of our life, it takes more thought and effort. By practicing these strategies, you will see improvements very quickly, and soon these habits will become your “new normal”.

For more detailed information on this active learning strategy, visit: usm.maine.edu/AGILE.