

# **The PQRST Method of Studying**

## ❖ **Preview**

- ***A preview is a brief glance of what is to come, getting the general plan and ideas, but not the details.***
- ***How do you get a preview of a text book?***
  - Look at the topics or subtopics that a book may be broken up into (like our Chemistry books). These often include brief descriptive headings.
  - Read the summaries at the *end* of the chapter *first*.
  - If there are no summaries or topic headings, read the first and last sentences of each paragraph.
    - Normally, the middle portion of paragraphs goes into details, while the beginning and end introduce and summarize the paragraph, respectively.
  - If none of the previous help, then try scanning.
    - Consists of running your eyes rapidly down a page, not reading word by word or reading every sentence, but picking a phrase here or there to get an idea of what the author is writing. Takes practice, but is very helpful.
- ***Previewing gives you the general picture of a chapter or section, recognizing the important points, giving you an idea of how it is organized.***

**Preview gives you the Big Picture—like looking at a picture of a jigsaw puzzle before trying to put the pieces together.**

## ❖ **Question**

- ***During the Preview step, make up some questions you think might be answered by a careful reading of the material.***
- ***At the end of chapters or sections, there is often a list of questions to answer. Read these first before you begin a detailed reading. (Think about it: obviously, these must be important points that the author wants you to notice—so notice them!)***
- ***What good is the Question step?***
  - Questions you find or formulate give **immediate** things to look for as you begin reading.
  - Encourages you to watch for details to answer the questions.
  - Helps you **concentrate** and **focus** by giving you something to hunt for when you study.
  - There are a limited number of good questions that can be asked on a subject. Many of the questions that you come up with may also appear on tests!

**Asking yourself intelligent, hard questions *before* you read the text or take notes will force you to concentrate to find the answers in your studies.**

## ❖ Read

- *Effective reading calls for reaction—that is, thinking hard about what you are reading.*
- *Consider each point as you read it. How is each idea relating to the others?*

**Learning takes place when you react energetically and aggressively to the material you are learning.**

## ❖ State

- *Say in your own words what you have read.*
- *How to state:*
  - Read a paragraph or two.
  - Stop and look away from the book.
  - Verbalize (speak out loud) what you just read in your own words.
- *Things to help you in the State process when you have finished reading:*
  - Topic or section headings in the book
  - Headings in your notes
  - Mark up your book, if allowed. Underline key sentences and use these in the State process.
  - Makes notes in the margins of your book about key points.
- *You must verbalize, putting the ideas from the reading into your own actual words. This forces you to react to the material—focus on it!*
- *The State step is an immediate check on whether you have taken the information read from short-term (sensory intake) to long-term (comprehension).*
- *If you are not able to state portions of the subject matter in your own words, this is an easy way to tell if you need to study those areas more.*

**In lab experiments, people have had better scores when they spend at least half their total study time in reflective thinking (the *Question* and *State* steps).**

## ❖ Test

- *Tests teachers make gauge your ability in that subject. Why not gauge you own ability before the teacher does?*
- *The Test step is a shortened run-through of the State step, but performed some time after your first study. It is a form of review.*
- *Consists of reflective thinking on the subject, as opposed to merely running your eyes over it.*
- *How to do it:*
  - Use topic headings, notes headings, margin notes, etc. just like in the state step.
  - Whatever you don't remember correctly, focus on these areas.

**The *State* step checks to see how much of what you studied was placed in short-term or long-term memory.**

## Summary

# Quantity ≠ Quality

**Quantity** is the time we spend studying. Don't expect to do well in your studies just because you're "putting your time in."

**Quality** studying is taking the time for reflective studying. This is what you do in the *Question, State, and Test* steps when you strive to comprehend the material.

If you're gonna put your time in to study, you might as well study the right way! Practice these steps.

- **Preview** what it is you're about to learn. Scan the text and get the general idea of each section or chapter.
- **Make and find Questions** about what you're about to learn.
- **Read** the text with these questions in mind. Try to find the answers and pose new questions. *React* to what you learn.
- **State** what you've learned out loud. Verbalizing forces you to organize your thoughts into clear, cohesive ideas.
- **Leading up to an exam or quiz, Test** yourself using a shortened version of the State step (verbalizing) to see what you've stored in long-term memory. Review any area that doesn't pass *your* test.