

## REVIEW OF SOME GUIDELINES ON STUDY METHODS

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# A STRATEGY FOR STUDY

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In this leaflet we shall outline PQRTS, a five step method for studying — **Previewing, Questioning, Reading, Summarising and Testing**.

This pattern may be applied to lectures and reading, summarising course material, and preparing for essays. Adapt the pattern as it suits your purpose. Here it is set out as for reading a book.

1. **Previewing** provides for a general picture of the work to be studied.
  - (a) First decide on the amount of work to be done and the time to be spent on it.
  - (b) Preview the whole book:
    - (i) Read the preface, introduction, foreword, and other material addressed to the reader.
    - (ii) Study the table of contents (and index if necessary).
    - (iii) Leaf through the book, reading the summaries and glancing at headings and topic sentences.
    - (iv) Check diagrams, maps, illustrations etc.
  - (c) Before reading each section, preview it quickly.
2. **Questions** help reading by giving it a purpose. As you preview or afterwards, keep asking questions.
  - (a) Ask your own questions. What do you already know about the subject? What would you like to know? What do you think the writer might say? Use the questions asked by the author; turn titles, headings and topic sentences into questions.
  - (b) At first write your questions down, but let this questioning become an ingrained mental habit.
3. **To read most effectively:**
  - (a) Read actively, not passively, asking yourself periodically what you have learned.
  - (b) Note especially important terms. Write down new definitions.
  - (c) Read everything, including tables, graphs and other illustrative materials.
  - (d) Use the speed appropriate for the material you are reading (see later notes on efficient reading).
  - (e) Compare your new work with what you already know.
4. **Summarise** your work at these times:
  - (a) As you read (see 3(a) and (b):
    - (i) by underlining (if it is your copy),
    - (ii) by noting main points,
    - (iii) by brief paraphrases.
  - (b) As you finish each section:
    - (i) by listing the main points,

- (ii) by reviewing the work and checking the points,
- (iii) by checking the answers to the questions asked,
- (iv) occasionally, by writing extended paraphrases, especially when you are trying to understand new ideas.

(c) Before you go to your final tests:

- (i) make master summaries of your notes from various sources,
- (ii) reduce these to major points for testing your recall of facts,
- (iii) arrange your notes in as many new patterns as possible.

## 5. Test your work frequently.

(a) By recitation:

- (i) as you read your work, section by section,
- (ii) in general, immediately after first learning your work. Remember the importance of *saying aloud* what you want to remember, or discussing material with other students.

(b) By review:

- (i) as you finish reading, survey the main headings.
- (ii) re-read, or skim read to check your summaries.

(c) These activities of *review* and *reciting* should occur:

- (i) immediately after studying something;
- (ii) once or twice between the first and final review;
- (iii) intensively before your final examination, leaving ample time for your final review.

(d) (i) Complete the *master sheets* for the topic (see 4(c)).

- (ii) Set yourself papers to answer. Use old papers as a guide.
- (iii) Reorganise your notes from books, lectures, tutorials, etc., into different patterns to test your memory as well as your material.
- (iv) Check your definitions and basic principles.
- (v) Make use of *key words* for recalling information.
- (vi) Remember, cramming may confuse you so that you cannot think clearly and use your available knowledge to the best advantage in an examination.