

Undergraduate and graduate students at the University of New England are required to read several types of texts—textbooks, fiction, collections of essays, PowerPoint summaries of class lectures, and scientific journal articles. For most students, the number-one reading challenge in college is managing the large amount of reading assigned while understanding and remembering content.

The basic reading strategy for most texts is the same:

- **Preview** the material to get an overview of the contents
- **Read** the material using strategies for comprehension
- **Review** the content before you move on to other assignments

Frequent review of fact-based texts throughout the semester is essential for retention of information.

We recommend the **PQ4R** method: **Preview, Question, Read, Reflect, Recite, Review.**

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#### **PQ4R Reading Method:**

**P: Preview** assigned reading before each class. Read chapter objectives and lists of key terms at the beginning of chapters. Then, skim the chapter headings in bold type. Read chapter summaries at the end.

**Q:** Next, study the assigned text one section at a time. Review the bold heading, then formulate a study **Question** that is answered by the heading and write it in the margin. This question focuses your thinking on the main idea and is a valuable study tool for review.

**R: Read** the section, mentally finding an answer to the question you wrote.

**R:** Then, **Reflect** on your reading, trying to connect it to something in your experience.

**R:** Next, return to your study question and try to **Recite** an answer to it, using the information you just read. Check the text if you have forgotten details and re-learn. Now you are ready to move on to the next section and repeat the process.

**R: Review** at the end of your study session for the day by answering study questions at the end of the chapter, making flash cards, and revisiting and answering the **Questions** you wrote in the margins.

#### **Adapting PQ4R to PowerPoint printouts**

Some instructors format their PowerPoint documents like textbooks—with topic headings—and some do not. You should download and print the PowerPoint documents before class and skim them to form an outline of the upcoming lecture in your mind.

- 1.) During class, take notes on the notes lines next to the slides.
  - 2.) After class, process the PowerPoint printouts by reviewing your notes to fill in missing details (ask a classmate).
  - 3.) Next, divide the slides into sections by topic and write a study question in the margin for each section.
  - 4.) Read and reflect on each section, then recite the information using the questions you wrote.
  - 5.) Review the entire document after you have read each section, using the study questions to test yourself.
  - 6.) Add key terms to your flashcard collection.
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**Practices that are usually not productive for students:**

- Falling behind the syllabus in your reading
- Reading while listening to music with lyrics
- Writing outlines of all the important information in each chapter
- Rewriting or typing class notes

**Practices that work for many students:**

- Reading in 50 minute blocks, followed by a ten minute break
- Reciting or reviewing material while talking out loud or moving your lips (Have your learning style analyzed to find out if this is a good technique for you.)
- Using study time to self-test rather than rereading the entire text (targeted rereading of material you have forgotten is helpful)
- Joining a study group to discuss the reading
- Getting regular exercise, which makes sitting for long periods easier.

For personalized help with reading assignments, make an appointment with your UNE Learning Specialist:

*Portland Campus:* Nora Krevans, 221-4259 or via e-mail, [nkrevans@une.edu](mailto:nkrevans@une.edu)

*Biddeford Campus:* Lorraine Pecchia, 602-2398, or via e-mail, [lpeccia@une.edu](mailto:lpeccia@une.edu)

*Online Programs:* Henri Moser, 207-221-4352, or via e-mail, [hmoser@une.edu](mailto:hmoser@une.edu)