



# Couper's Corner



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## How to Read Textbooks → PQRS



Whether you are in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade or college, reading a textbook is a lot different from reading a story or a novel. If you begin by reading the pages one by one, you're probably going to end up a little confused and not understanding what you've read very well. This is because the brain needs a framework for the content—it needs to know where it's going—like following a “map” when you are driving somewhere.

As part of our study skills course, we teach our students how to read textbooks “actively” using the time-tested method of **PQRS**. Here's how it works:

- P** The best way to start is to **PREVIEW** the material first. Scan the entire chapter looking at the headings, the charts, the pictures, everything in bold or italics, and especially the summary. If the chapter doesn't have a summary, read the introductory and summary paragraphs. This process just takes a few minutes, but it gives you the best warm-up activity to get your mind focused on your reading.
- Q** Next, have some **QUESTIONS** ready that you'll be answering as you read. Otherwise, you will be reading “passively” and won't be able to concentrate very well. You can use the questions that were assigned to you or the review questions at the end of the chapter. If you don't have any questions, then make up your own as you read each chapter heading. For example, if you're reading about an historical figure, ask yourself:

**What** did he do? **When** and **where** did he do it? **Why** and **how** did he do it? Jot down the answers to your questions as you read. This is called reading “actively”—reading for a purpose.

- R** Now **READ** for about 20 minutes at a time with short breaks in between. This is because your memory retention is greatest at the beginning and the end of your study times. Answer your questions as you read. To help keep you focused, you can also stop at the end of each paragraph and ask yourself what you just read. You can also highlight any important ideas or make notes (using your own words) in the margins or on “sticky” notes you can attach to the page.
- S** At the end of your study time, **SUMMARIZE** in your own mind what you have just read. Look over the headings again, the answers to your questions, and any notes you may have made. Ask yourself if you understood the material or if you need to review a section again later. Summarizing is also a way of reviewing what you have read. This process just takes a few minutes but it will help you remember more of what you've just learned to make studying for tests a lot easier later. Study skills are all about working smarter—not harder!

Don't forget to call us about **summer tutoring**. Summer is a great time to catch up quickly in reading and math!!



**About Us...** Since 1999, we have been teaching **reading** to students of all ages quickly and easily using the internationally acclaimed Academic Associates® phonics-based reading course. We also tutor students in all grades in **math** and **physics**. **Study skills** and **career assessments** are available for older students. Our evaluations are always **FREE!** Call us anytime with any questions you may have—we're here to be of service!