an excellent set of notes. Read only one section at a time, and repeat Question, Read and Recall for each section. If you cannot recall accurately, re-read the section.

**Review the main points of your reading**

After you have read the material you wished to cover, or have nearly reached the end of the time you have available, stop and review all you have read, not just the most recent section. If you have taken accurate notes, this will enable you to check the accuracy of your review without having to use the text.

Learning and remembering material is like inoculation. Several small doses at short intervals after the initial dose are more effective than a large dose after a long interval. You will find that only very short sessions are needed to maintain this level of knowledge, so in the long run this method saves you a lot of time.

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Introduction

There are different ways of reading, and the good reader chooses the best style according to his/her purpose in reading. A good reader will select and vary the style of reading.

The major styles are:

Scanning

This involves a rapid search for a particular point, or item. It is important not to be distracted by any ‘interesting’ sections. This style is often used when writing essays.

Skimming

Similar to scanning, but you are not looking for anything in particular. You use this to get an overall ‘feel’ of a book or article.

Reading and recall

This is the type of reading usually associated with study. Your purpose is to understand the ideas and information, and to recall this when required. A method for doing this style of reading is called ‘SQ3R’. This method involves stages to be used when reading a particular book or chapter – Survey, Question, Read, Recall, Review.

Survey what you are about to read

Browse through the book, noting the way the material has been organised by the author. The headings in the text are really the author’s outline for the topic. Read headings and sub-headings, look at the pictures, graphs etc. and read their captions. Think about why they may have been included in this part of the book. Also, check the Contents section at the start of the book and read the Introduction (this usually outlines the author’s purpose in writing the book). At the end of the survey you will have a good idea of what is included before you read the text.

Question what you are about to read

As you come to the heading for each section, turn it into one or more questions, and then try to find the answer to your questions while reading the text. For example, the heading ‘Women’s lives: tradition and change’ you could ask ‘What traditions? What changes? How does tradition connect with change in women’s lives?’ The answer to these questions should be in the text.

Read the section

The time you spent on the first two steps will reduce the time you need to spend on this step. Don’t just recognise the words, but search for answers to the questions you have asked. If the text refers you to an illustration, spend time studying it and relating it to the text. You should also note main points that answer questions you have not asked. Generally, there is only one main idea in a paragraph, and it will usually be expressed in only one sentence in the paragraph. It is often the first or the last sentence, and the other sentences expand or support it.

Recall the main points you have just read

After reading each section, put the book aside and try to recall the answers to the questions you posed at the beginning. Also, try to recall any other important points. If you want a record of these points, write them down in your own words, and you will have