

Basics of Incremental Reading

Incremental Reading is basically breaking down and spacing out your reading. It's a different form of spaced repetition. The process consists of importing articles, pdf's, or whatever you want to read, and creating **extracts** (highlights of the most important parts), and converting those extracts into questions and answers. The concept is kind of hard to explain.

There are 5 basic components to Incremental Reading:

1. Importing (Getting the information you want to read into the software (Anki/Supermemo) so you can work with it)
2. Reading articles and decomposing articles into manageable pieces
3. converting most important pieces of knowledge into question-answer material
4. review of the material to ensure good recall
5. handling of the unavoidable overflow of information

Importing

Importing is getting the text you want to incrementally read into the software. In supermemo, there are multiple ways to import articles -- the easiest way being to copy your article to the clipboard, press *Ctrl + N*, and it'll be imported. There are other ways to import such as mass import (importing multiple articles at once), dedicated import (importing from wikipedia/youtube), and local file imports, which is importing files into supermemo.

Reading Articles

After you import an article/video, you read the article from the top (or where you left off last time). While you're reading you can modify the text (to make it simpler to read) and delete text that's irrelevant. Also, you can create extracts on the important interesting parts by highlighting it and pressing a keyboard shortcut. You can edit extracts if it doesn't provide enough context. Then when you decide to stop reading whenever you want and when you do you can mark your last read point. So when you next encounter the article (at a spaced interval) you can start where you left off. Then, you can go on to the next article (if you have one) and repeat the process.

Extracting fragments, questions and answers

When engaging in incremental reading, you can mark important paragraphs. In SuperMemo, those paragraphs can be extracted as separate mini-articles that will later be used to refresh your memory. Each extracted paragraph or section becomes a new element (elements are like cards in Anki) that will be subject to the same reading algorithm as the original article. So basically, you will be able to see your extracts at spaced intervals as well.

In Supermemo, you can add references to extracts and prompts to recover context.

From the way I've explained it so far, Incremental Reading seems like importing stuff to read, editing the text as you choose, and creating extracts to read at spaced intervals. And that is a good way to think of incrementally reading.

1. Reading the learning material from start to finish with a spaced schedule
2. Re-reading the extracts (highlighted material) with another spaced schedule of its own

But once the time between reviews increases beyond 200-300 days, reading and re-reading articles and extracts (passive review) will often result in insufficient recall. Which is where creating cloze deletions (questions) from your extracts come in. By using cloze, we can go from passive review of extracts to active recall. You do not need to wait until a paragraph or a sentence becomes hard to recall in passive review. For your most important material, you can create cloze items immediately after finding a piece of information that you need to remember well.

Example:

Say we extracted the following text from an article on the Greenhouse Effect:

In the absence of the greenhouse effect, the Earth's average surface temperature of 14°C could be -18°C (predicted by models based on ideal thermally conductive blackbody)

To turn this into a cloze item, we can cloze out the information we want to remember by highlighting the part we want to cloze and pressing a keyboard shortcut (in Supermemo it's Alt+Z but in Anki it'll be Ctrl+Shift+C). Anyway, say I wanted to remember the numbers -- I could turn the extract into a cloze deletion that looks like this:

In the absence of the greenhouse effect, the Earth's average surface temperature of {{...}} could be {{...}} (predicted by models based on ideal thermally conductive blackbody)

You can edit these questions as you review them and make them better.

Repetition and review

The algorithms that determine the timing of (1) repetitions of question-and-answer material and (2) reviewing reading material are analogous but not identical. Most importantly, all repetitions and article presentations happen in increasing intervals by default. In incremental reading, you will see a constant inflow of new articles into your collection. Unprocessed material will need to compete with the newly imported material.

You can manually choose the next time you want to see the article and you can give the most important articles you have to read a high *priority* which will make you see them more.

This is a very basic introduction to incremental reading and there are many more features that I have failed to mention. I'm not an expert on incremental reading so I might not have explained everything well.

This is a very useful article on Incremental Reading: <http://super-memory.com/help/read.htm>

As for workflow, I imagine it would be somewhat like this:

1. Import the things you want to read and process into Anki/Supermemo
2. Read through the materials -- Editing, Deleting, creating extracts and just actively engaging with the material as you go.
3. When you get tired, stuck, or bored, Mark where you left off and move onto the next article doing the same process again or just stop. If you want to see an article again on a certain day choose the date you want to see it again.
4. Review the extracts that you have made using a space repetition algorithm. You can either passively reread them or convert them into questions and answers.
5. Repeat