The Scientific Approach
All social sciences use the scientific method, which is a systematic way of drawing conclusions about events or observations

- Five steps in the “scientific approach”
  - 1. Problem or Research Question.
  - 3. Formulation of Hypothesis/
  - 4. Research Design.
  - 5. Data Analysis.

The Characteristics of Social Sciences
- 1. The emphasis is on facts.
- 2. Many new terms are introduced.
- 3. Graphics are important.
- 4. Research references are stressed.
- 5. Theories and their creators are emphasized.

Specialized Reading Techniques
- 1. Identify Key Terms
  - Terms that describe general behavior and organizational patterns
  - Names of stages and processes
  - Laws, principles, theories, and models
  - Names of important researchers and theorists
- 2. Understand Theories
- 3. Read Research Reports
  - Determine who conducted the research.
  - Identify its purpose.
  - Find out how the research was done.
  - Understand the research results.
  - Find out what theory the results support.
  - Discover the implications and applications of the research.
- 4. Read to Make Comparisons
- 5. Read to Make Practical Applications
  - Example: “Project the key political issues that will be involved in the next presidential election.”
- 6. Focus on Large Ideas

Thought Patterns in the Social Sciences
- Comparison and contrast
- Cause and Effect
- Listing
- Definition
"Top Ten" strategies for success (and failure)

Best Study Practices
1. Read assigned texts/handouts
2. Don't procrastinate
3. Pay attention to the organization of the text
4. Highlight key points/terms in text as you read
5. Review often!
6. Study with a study group
7. Get help before it's too late
8. Do homework assignments
9. Make an outline or take notes of your reading
10. Set aside a quiet place to study with few distractions

Best Ways to Study for a Test
1. Review and reorganize notes
2. Review text summaries and highlighted points
3. Get together with study partners (choose ones who are serious about succeeding)
4. Complete study guides
5. Ask questions you are unclear on before the exam/understand what is being tested
6. Make practice tests
7. Don't procrastinate
8. Read assigned texts/handouts
9. Make note cards
10. Eat well and get enough sleep

Thirty-two days is the length of time thought by some behavioral psychologists 40 to be necessary for creating a new habit or extinguishing an old one.
Strategies for Success

11. Best Things to Do in Class to Succeed
   1. Ask questions and participate
   2. Take notes that you can understand
   3. Attend class
   4. Pay attention (turn off cell phone)
   5. Come prepared
   6. Sit where you can see and hear the instructor
   7. Tell instructor if you are having trouble with the way he/she is teaching
   8. Get to know the instructor (go to office hours)
   9. Read applicable text before class so you know what to expect
  10. Eat well and get enough sleep

Best Resources to Help You Succeed

1. Instructor
2. Study partner for each subject (choose successful students)
3. Tutor
4. Library
5. Student Success Center
6. Teaching Assistants
7. Study Group
8. You – be proactive
9. Professionals in the subject
10. Select internet resources

Common Mistakes Students Make

1. Not attending class
2. Not taking responsibility for themselves
3. Procrastinating
4. Not asking questions when something is unclear
5. Not spending enough time studying (for every 1 hr in class, should study 2-3 hours outside of class)
6. Not getting help soon enough
7. Not taking notes
8. Not answering questions fully on homework and tests
9. Not completing assignments and being up-to-date on material
10. Being passive
To be a powerful reader you need a confident, creative, and positive attitude. You must be willing to change some behavior patterns and try some new techniques even though these changes may at times shake you out of your comfort zone. As you begin to take more active control of your reading and cognitive processing, you must be willing to feel uncomfortable; you must develop confidence and believe that you will succeed in reading more efficiently with a faster rate and increased understanding.

The importance of this commitment cannot be overstated. Your decision to commit the time and energy required for success includes a commitment to this program of reading improvement, to yourself, and to your potential. You will also need patience; changing habits is not an instantaneous process. Consistent practice and a positive attitude will, however, begin to result in progress long before the end of the semester.

Here are some of the habits of fluent readers that you should begin to cultivate in yourself:

Be aware of the importance of your environment.

- Pick a quiet spot free from distractions.
- Good lighting is important. Use a 100-watt bulb for your study area.
- Take control. Check out Kansas State University’s advice on improving concentration when you read and study. Be sure to read the whole page including the factors you can control now many of which are environmental factors.

Be physically at your best.

- Read at the time of day when you are most mentally acute; avoid reading when you are
fatigued.
- Be sure your vision is not in need of correction. Blurred vision, headaches, and fatigue when you try to read are signs that your eyesight is not adequate.
- Relax. Reading performance, like many physical activities, is best when you are relaxed, not tense.
- Nutrition is important. Avoid foods loaded with processed sugar; too much sugar can inhibit your ability to concentrate.
- Proper hydration is also a must. Dehydration results in decreased mental acuity, foggy thinking, and lack of concentration. Drink water. Contrary to popular belief, drinks loaded with caffeine (sodas, coffee, and tea) are not good choices for studying; caffeine is very dehydrating.

Practice good mental habits.
- Remember to prepare to read. In the pre-reading stage set your purpose for reading, choose an appropriate reading mode, and preview the selection to activate schema. Don’t forget to read introductory and summary material first.
- Concentrate. Remember that another word for concentration is "awareness." Remember metacognitive awareness? Avoid passive, brain dead reading; it’s a waste of time. Here are some great tips for increasing concentration. (Scroll down to find the link to "Top Ten Tips for Increasing Concentration". While you're there take a look at some of the other valuable college success links.)
- Read for ideas and concepts. Visualize as you read. Picture in your mind an outline or graphic representation (map) of the author's main idea, significant details, and supporting points.
## Annotation Technique

### Close Reading Cues
(Becoming an active reader)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When reading, identify</th>
<th>Write in margin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main idea</td>
<td>Main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis (claim)</td>
<td>Thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence: (facts, examples, descriptive</td>
<td>[Evidence]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>detail, quotes) [Supporting Details]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications of evidence</td>
<td>*** (write what they are)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamental concepts and their explanations</td>
<td>Highlight or underline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author’s viewpoint</td>
<td>VP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author’s tone</td>
<td>Tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme threading throughout the text</td>
<td>Theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your response to certain claims (reflect on</td>
<td>Agree/Disagree/Skeptical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your knowledge and experiences)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclear or confusing parts, faulty logic</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problematic assumptions being made</td>
<td>Assumption(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your reaction to certain parts</td>
<td>Sad, happy, funny, angry, confusing,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>biased, illogical, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown word</td>
<td>Circle word (look up in dictionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and write meaning in margin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Google: Close reading strategies
Thinking notes: A Strategy to Encourage Close Reading
https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/student-annotated-reading-strategy

*Designed by Lisa M. Algee 2013*
Seven Hints On Time Planning*  
*Taken from Effective Study Materials P.O. Box 603, San Marcos, Texas

1. **Build your schedule around your commitments.** Some activities have fixed time requirements and others are flexible. The most common are:
   - **FIXED:** classes, eating, organizations, worship, employment
   - **FLEXIBLE:** sleeping, study, recreation, personal grooming

2. **Plan sufficient study time.** Most college classes require about **two hours** of outside work per week per credit. Multiply your credit load by two to get an idea of the time you need to study. If you are a slow reader, or have other study needs, plan more time to study. **Break assignments into smaller segments,** such as library research, read articles & take notes, rough draft, edit paper, final draft. **Break study tasks into smaller segments,** such as: read chapter, outline chapter, make note cards, study note cards, review for exam.

3. **Study at a regular time** and in a regular place. Knowing what you are going to study, and when, saves a lot of time in making decisions, finding necessary materials, etc. Commit yourself more definitely to "study history" or "study chemistry" at certain hours.

4. **Study soon after class.** Check over lecture notes while they are fresh. Start assignments while your memory of the assignment is still accurate.

5. **Utilize off hours for study.** Those scattered one or two hours free periods between classes are easily wasted. Using them for study will result in free time for recreational activities later on.

6. **Study no more than two hours on any one course at one time.** After studying for two hours you begin to tire and your ability to concentrate decreases rapidly. To keep up your efficiency, take a break and then switch to studying another subject.

7. **Borrow time—don't steal it.** Whenever an unexpected activity arises that takes up time you had planned to use studying, decide immediately where you can trade for "free" time to make up the missed study time and adjust your schedule for that week.

**Maximize your efficiency by working with your body cycles:**

- **Cognitive Tasks 8am-12pm:** Cognitive, or mental, tasks such as reading, calculating, and problem solving are performed most efficiently in the morning.

- **Short Term Memory 6am-10am:** Short term memory tasks such as last minute reviewing for tests performed early in the morning.

- **Long Term Memory 1pm-4pm:** Longer term memory tasks such as memorizing speeches and information for application are best performed in the afternoon.

- **Manual Dexterity 2pm-6pm:** You are most efficient at tasks involving the use of your hands such as keyboarding in the afternoon and early evening.

- **Physical Workouts:** Because of Circadian Rhythms it is best to engage in physical activity in the evening when your large muscle coordination is at its peak.

- **Monitor & Reward Behavior:** Acknowledge what you have accomplished! Check off items and reward yourself! Take a break after completing an important task and reschedule uncompleted objectives. Acknowledge your effort!