Chapter 1 Rubin and Babbie (2008)  
Why Study Research?

In social work practice and in life, people seek to understand the world around them; people make decisions based on the information available to them.

Reviews of social work effectiveness have provided the impetus for evidence-based practice.

Skills to critique research quality are required to determine if valid empirical evidence is present.

Two main reasons to do research are for compassion and professional ethics. Additional reasons include being able to use and to contribute to research, to systematically collect accurate information during assessments, and to determine if interventions are successful.

The **scientific method** provides a foundation for collecting accurate information

- everything is open to question
- knowledge is provisional and subject to refutation
- careful observation provides a basis for findings
- observation should be systematic and comprehensive
- one should pursue objectivity (minimize bias)
- findings should be replicated

Other ways of knowing include:

- Tradition
- Authority
- Common sense
- Popular media

Several sources of error in inquiry (obtaining information) are possible:

- inaccurate observation
- overgeneralization
- selective observation
- ex post facto hypothesizing
- ego involvement
- other forms of illogical reasoning
- premature closure of inquiry
- to err is human

Science offers protection against errors in inquiry.