Reading an article that reports on original research.

These questions are in the order that most articles provide answers. Sometimes, though, authors change the order.

1. What is the basic research question?

2. Does the author refer to theories? If so, what theory(ies)?

3. Does the author summarize past research on the topic?
   Is the author critical of such research, e.g., does the author say that past studies have failed to do something the he/she will do in the study you are about to read?
   What is one major criticism of past studies?

4. Is the study explanatory?
   If it is, clearly state one major hypothesis.

   The independent variable is ________________
   The dependent variable is ________________

5. What is the population that the researcher wants to describe?

6. What is the name of the kind of sample that the researcher selected?
   Probability, specifically: __________________________
   Non-probability, specifically _________________________
   Each unit in the study (element in the sample) is a/an ____________________________.

7. Is the research done in the “real world” or in a laboratory setting?
8. The main way in which the researchers collect data is:

observation of behavior  interviews or questionnaires  locate existing data, e.g. official records
other ________________________________________________

9. Select two important variables, and describe how the researcher operationalized each.

variable ______________________

variable ______________________

10. Do the authors measure any of their variables in more than one way?

11. State one finding (empirical generalization) from this study.

   Evaluate the evidence:

   A. Did the researchers measure the value a unit had on X before the unit’s value on Y?

   B. Did they find the expected association between x and y?

   C. Did they identify other possible “true causes” of differences in Y, and measure them also?

12. Do the authors discuss the meaning of their findings for?

   Understanding the topic?

   Developing programs or policy?

   Further research?

   Do the authors critically-examine their own methodology?