

What is scientific management?

Taylorism – also known as “scientific management” – revolutionized the way we work and forever changed the fundamental relationship between workers and their managers. Developed in 1909, by the engineer and theorist Frederick Winslow Taylor, the basic premise of Taylorism was that by “optimizing and simplifying jobs, productivity would increase.” Henry Ford was one of the first business leaders to adopt Taylor’s theories – which resulted in the breakthrough assembly-line mode of production – and his ideas permeate the way many businesses are run to this day. One of the most notable and noteworthy examples today is Amazon.

Source: mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_Taylor.htm



At the core of scientific management lie four principles:

1. Replace rule-of-thumb methods of doing work with ones based on scientific study of the tasks to be carried out.
2. Select and train individuals for specific tasks.
3. Give individuals clear instructions on what they have to do, then supervise them while they do it.
4. Divide work between managers and workers, so that the managers “scientifically” plan what is to be done, and the workers then do it.

Source: Hindle, Tim. “Scientific Management.” *Economist.com*, *The Economist*, 9 Feb. 2009, www.economist.com/node/13092819.



Learn more about Taylorism here.
WATCH: youtu.be/CCsOqWbK46o



SCAN ME





Your task for this activity is in **three parts**, and **will take at least a week to complete**. So plan ahead and give yourself some time!

Part I

First, make a list of your routine chores at home. If you don't have any chores, find some! We're sure your parents won't mind! These could be sweeping the floor, dusting furniture, making your bed, picking up the trash around the house, cleaning the cat's litterbox. Nothing is too big or too small! While you complete each chore, time yourself to see exactly how long it takes you to do them at your "normal" pace or speed. Compile this data on a **spreadsheet or neatly organized chart**.

Part II

Next, think of ways that you could "improve" or make yourself more efficient at completing these tasks. Practice the tasks again and re-time yourself. Record this new data alongside your previous times.

Part III

For the last part, you will write a **four to five paragraph** essay addressing the following questions:

- How did your times compare? How much more efficient were you the second time around?
- If you had to do one of these tasks over and over again, do you think you could sustain the same pace over a 9-hour work day? And on a daily basis?
- What kinds of tools or equipment would make your job easier or even more efficient?
- **Make connections:** How could a company adopting principles of Taylorism lead to lower prices for consumer goods? Is this always a good thing?
- What are some of the downsides of Taylorism?