1. **Understand the Problem** 
   * What are the inputs and expected outputs?
   * What are the constraints?
   * Can you explain it in plain English?
   * Try to write out some example cases
2. **Break It Down** 
   * Divide the problem into smaller sub-problems
   * Identify the core functionality needed
   * Sketch out the basic steps in pseudocode
3. **Plan Your Solution** 
   * Think about data structures you'll need
   * Consider time and space complexity
   * Start with a simple solution, then optimize
4. **Test-Driven Development** 
   * Write test cases first
   * Include edge cases
5. **Implement and Iterate** 
   * Start with a working solution
   * Refactor for better efficiency/readability
   * Add error handling

1. **Review and Reflect** 
   * Is the code readable?
   * Can it be simplified?
   * Are there better approaches?