

Design and Analysis of Experiments

01 - What is Science

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*“Science and everyday life cannot
and should not be separated.”*

Rosalind Franklin (1920 – 1958)
English Chemist and X-ray crystallographer



What is science?

Some common misconceptions

- Science is a collection of facts; ✗
- Science is the creation of new gadgets; ✗
- Scientific ideas are absolute and unchangeable; ✗
- Scientific ideas are subject to change, therefore unreliable; ✗
- Observations give answers directly to the scientists; ✗
- Science **proves** stuff; ✗
- Science can only **disprove** stuff; ✗
- The scientist works to **show** that his/her theory is right; ✗

- Facts vs hypotheses vs theories vs laws;

STAND BACK



I'M GOING TO TRY

SCIENCE

What is science?

A good operational definition

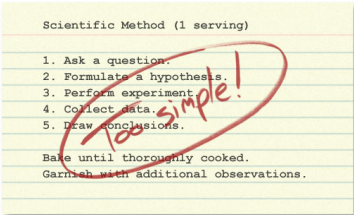


*“What do you think science is?
There’s nothing magical about science.
It is simply a systematic way for carefully
and thoroughly observing nature and
using consistent logic to evaluate results.”*

– Steven P. Novella

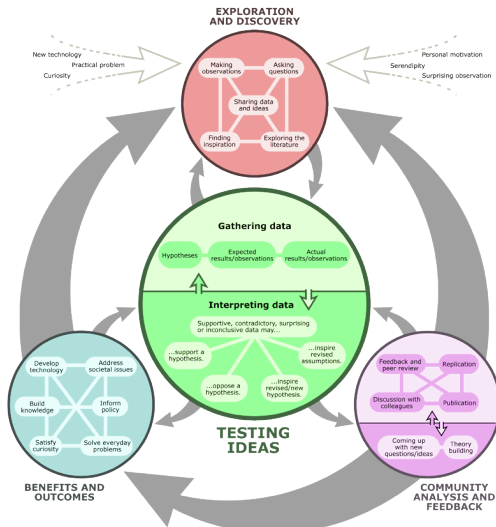
What is science?

The scientific process

- Normally shown as a flowchart or a sequence of steps;
 - Oversimplification of a complex and iterative process;
 - Suggests an “end” to the process.
- 
- Actually includes:
 - Several activities, performed at different stages;
 - Interaction with the scientific community;
 - Creative, “outside the box” thinking;
 - Preliminary conclusions, subject to revision as new and better data become available;
 - Learning from failures as much as from successes.

What is science?

The scientific process

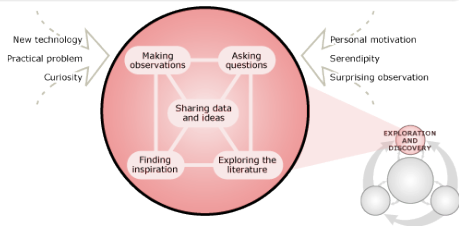


What is science?

The scientific process

“Dans les champs de l’observation le hasard ne favorise que les esprits pr?par?s.” – **Louis Pasteur** (Univ. Lille, France, 1854).

- Observations → **questions**;
- Exploratory experimentation;
- Preparation + serendipity.



Benzene (1865)



Kekule

Radioactivity (1896)



Becquerel

Penicillin (1928)



Fleming

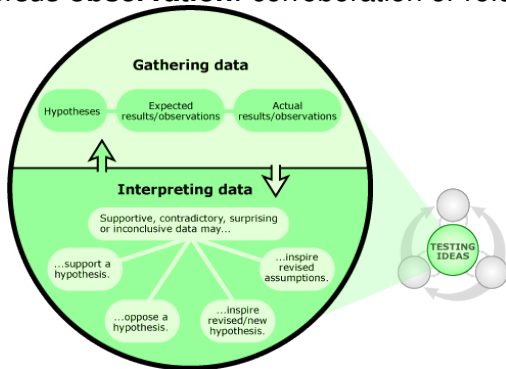
Top image: <http://goo.gl/fy8G1h> - (c) Understanding Science, 2015. Used with permission.

Scientists: <http://goo.gl/SG6sgp> | <http://goo.gl/rhLC9C> | <http://goo.gl/CFj8M1>

What is science?

The scientific process

- Drawing and testing hypotheses;
- Comparing alternative explanations;
- Accepting / rejecting ideas based on **evidence**;
- **Predictions** *versus* **observation**: corroboration or refutation?

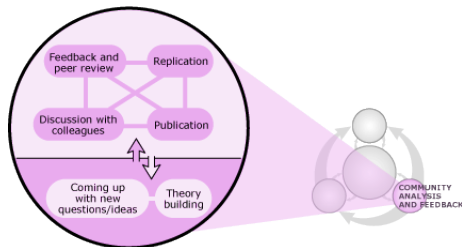


What is science?

The scientific process

Interaction with the scientific community is **fundamental**:

- Colleagues;
- Collaborators;
- Reviewers;
- Rivals;



This interaction plays essential roles for the progress of research:

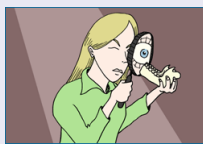
Criticism



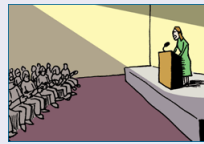
Inspiration



Vigilance



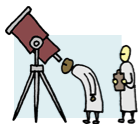
Motivation



What is science?

The scientific process

Publication and peer review.



Scientists study something.

The peer review process



Scientists write about their results.



Journal editor receives an article and sends it out for peer review.



Peer reviewers read the article and provide feedback to the editor.

Editor may send reviewer comments to the scientists who may then revise and resubmit the article for further review. If an article does not maintain sufficiently high scientific standards, it may be rejected at this point.



If an article finally meets editorial and peer standards it is published in a journal.

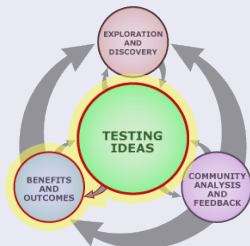
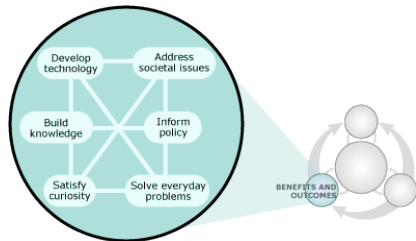
- Additionally, *post-publication review* by the wider scientific community;
- **Replication** and verification of results;
- **Reproducibility** is essential.

What is science?

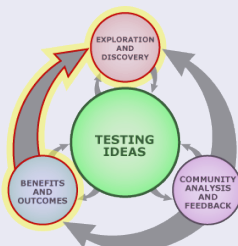
The scientific process

The scientific process is a way of building knowledge:

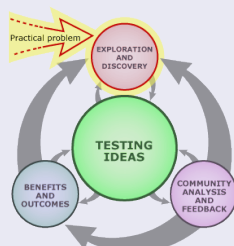
- Generate and test new ideas about how the world works;
- Iteratively increasing the reliability of the knowledge;



Knowledge → Applications



Technologies → Discovery



Applications → Investigation

Bibliography

Required reading

- 1 *Understanding Science*. 2014. University of California Museum of Paleontology. 3 January 2014. - <http://www.understandingscience.org>
- 2 F.L.H. Wolfs, *APPENDIX E: Introduction to the Scientific Method*. - <http://goo.gl/osGpU>

Recommended reading

- 1 Carl Sagan, *The demon-haunted world: science as a candle in the dark*, Random House, 1996.
- 2 The Skeptics Guide to the Universe. - <http://www.theskepticsguide.org>

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