

## Opener

- What would you do if cell phones suddenly disappeared?
- Would you be happier, healthier, more anxious, lonelier, more productive?
- Ask students to write down three positive and three negative things that would result. Randomly pick three people to respond with one point each.

*5 minutes*

## Question everything?

- The first philosopher.
- His mission: to find out and critically evaluate the assumptions that his fellow citizens made about how best to live.
- His method: challenging others to examine their assumptions. Often resulting in skeptical conclusions: the only thing he knew was how little he knew.
- His fate: eventually he pissed off enough people that they killed him for corrupting the youth.

*15 minutes*

## What do we know and how do we know it?

Skepticism: a general attitude of questioning things instead of taking them for granted as true. What are its uses and limits?

Example: have cell phones destroyed a generation?

Skimming task.

- Read through cell phone article to find out:
- List three effects that author claims cell phone use has had on the youngest generation.
- What are the cut off dates of this generation.
- What sources of evidence does the author use to base her conclusions on?

How might we go about evaluating claims like this for scientific adequacy?

We need to answer two questions:

- Does the evidence support the claims made?
- Is the evidence itself reliable?

*20 minutes*

## What is science anyway?

Science as organized skepticism.

Constraints on skepticism:

- Rejection of global skepticism
- Many eyes make all bugs shallow
- Hypothetico-deductive method
  - make claims explicit and testable
  - test them

- put forward theories last
  - theories subject to revision based on new data, new theories, new ideas
  - aims towards integration of knowledge
- Naturalistic explanations only.

*10 minutes*

## **Philosophical questions about science**

Brainstorming activity: come up with 2 of each kind of philosophical question

Questions should be:

- general
- about basic assumptions
- not the kind of questions that science answers
- the sort of questions inquisitive kids ask

*Metaphysical questions:* questions about reality, what exists, its basic nature and principles of operation

*Epistemological questions:* questions about knowledge, its possibility, its forms and their limitations

*Axiological questions:* questions of value, what matters, right and wrong, good and evil, justice, fairness, beauty

*15 minutes*

## **Conclusions**

Why doesn't skepticism have to entail relativism?