Socratic Method and Scientific Method

Socratic Method	Scientific Method
1. Wonder. Pose a question (of the "What is *X ?"* form).	*1. Wonder*. Pose a question.
2. *Hypothesis*. Suggest a plausible answer (a definition or *definiens*) from which some conceptually testable hypothetical propositions can be deduced.	2. *Hypothesis*. Suggest a plausible answer (a theory) from which some empirically testable hypothetical propositions can be deduced.
3. *Elenchus* ; "testing," "refutation," or "cross-examination." Perform a thought experiment by imagining a case which conforms to the *definiens* but clearly fails to exemplify the *definiendum*, or vice versa. Such cases, if successful, are called *counterexamples*. If a counterexample is generated, return to step 2, otherwise go to step 4.	3. *Testing*. Construct and perform an experiment which makes it possible to observe whether the consequences specified in one or more of those hypothetical propositions actually follow when the conditions specified in the same proposition(s) pertain. If the experiment fails, return to step 2, otherwise go to step 4.
4. Accept the hypothesis as provisionally true. Return to step 3 if you can conceive any other case which may show the answer to be defective.	4. Accept the hypothesis as provisionally true. Return to step 3 if there other predictable consequences of the theory which have not been experimentally confirmed.
5. Act accordingly.	5. Act accordingly.

Last Updated 8 January, 1996