


The Science of Life in the Universe

LEARNING GOALS

<p>2.1 THE ANCIENT DEBATE ABOUT LIFE BEYOND EARTH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did attempts to understand the sky start us on the road to science? Why did the Greeks argue about the possibility of life beyond Earth? 	<p>2.2 THE COPERNICAN REVOLUTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did the Copernican revolution further the development of science? How did the Copernican revolution alter the ancient debate on extraterrestrial life? 	<p>2.3 THE NATURE OF MODERN SCIENCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can we distinguish science from nonsense? What is a scientific theory? 	<p> THE PROCESS OF SCIENCE IN ACTION</p> <p>2.4 THE FACT AND THEORY OF GRAVITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is gravity? Do we really understand gravity?
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What are the "hallmarks" of science?
 What is the scientific method?
 What is a scientific paradigm shift?

Here, we use historical perspective to learn that science is an imperfect human endeavor, and to some degree, is an art form founded upon philosophical principles that permeate our culture and society. For the most part, science is a painful step-by-step process, marked by creative thought, and small incremental "progress". Occasionally, a "revolution" occurs, where progress takes a huge leap accompanied by a profound change in our understanding (paradigm shifts). Science and its history teach us that we can never know the actual "truth" or have the complete and total correct theory. We can only continue to improve on our understanding of nature and the universe.

The Power of the Mind...

Modern Science starts with the Greeks

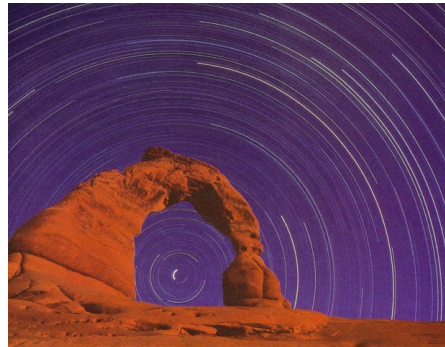
It was all in their minds... the world could be understood through reason alone. Plato and his student Aristotle believed that the universe beyond Earth was perfect, beautiful, and immutable.

Circle – the most perfect form

Sphere – the extension of the Circle

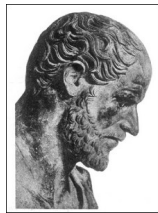
Aristotle's model was sophisticated for its time, based upon circles and spheres...

This "model" reigned supreme for 2000+ years- nobody questioned it because they didn't question the notion that reasoning alone *based upon the principles of beauty and perfection* could elucidate the nature of the universe.



Star trails – 6 hour exposure

Aristotle and his Model of the Universe ~350 BC

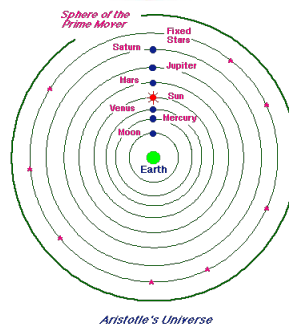
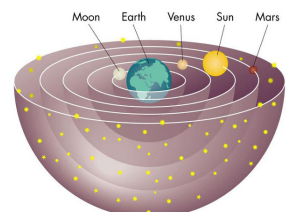


- Earth is at the center and nonmoving.
- Planets locked onto spheres that rotate.
- Stars locked onto most outer sphere- the celestial sphere.

*All motions circular- constant speeds.
Everything beyond earth is perfect.
Nothing ever changes.*

Aristotle argued there is no other life in the universe beyond earth, but other scholars believed there could be. Aristotle won all debates and his views were adopted for the scientific model that lasted centuries.

Geocentric Model

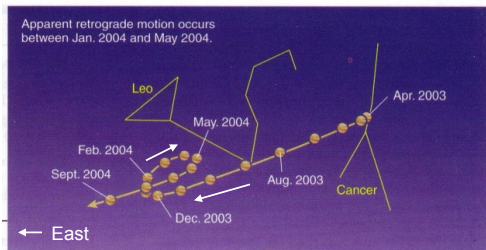


Ptolemy and his Fine Tuning of Aristotle ~ 150 AD

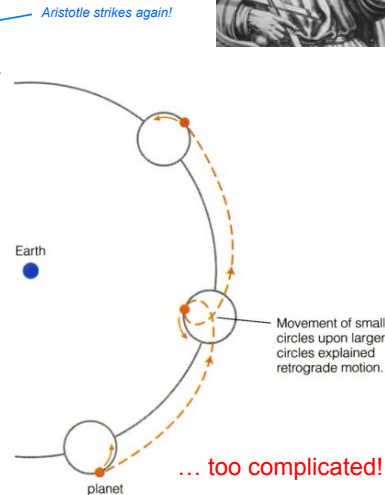
Apparent motion of planets is sometimes “backwards” - called **Retrograde Motion** – westward motion.



Ptolemy explained this with smaller **circular** motion, also moving at constant speed; the combined speeds of the circles are tuned to the observed periods of retrograde motion



Link to see Video Demonstration: 3:57 <http://youtu.be/GevV1yvMJbc>



Copernicus and his Model of the Universe ~ 1500 AD



Sun at the center (**heliocentric**) with a rotating Earth!

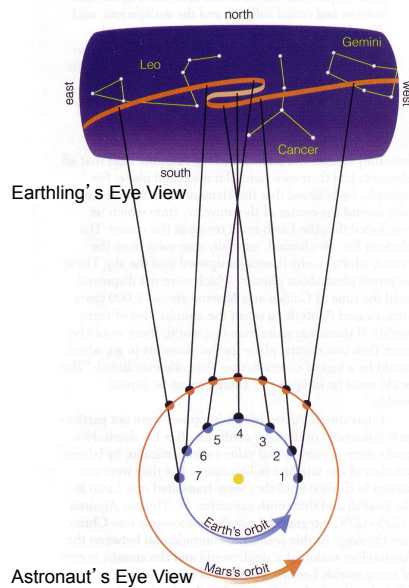
showed it was a *simpler model* that explained the motions and behaviors of the planets (including retrograde motion)

Still, used **circles** for orbits and this still required *fine tuning*...

Copernicus risked his life to publish this book, for the Vatican had adopted Aristotle's model – it was a capital crime to express ideas counter to their doctrine.



Copernicus and his Model of the Universe ~ 1500 AD



Retrograde Motion (RGM) explained...

In a heliocentric model, the RGM is simply an *apparent motion*...

EXAMPLE: apparent backward motion of the car next to you when you go around a long curve on the inside lane and pass the other car.

During certain alignments, Earth (on the inside lane) "passes" Mars (on the outside lane) and in relation to the background stars (which are so far away the *appear* to not move) Mars appears to "slide backwards" on the sky.

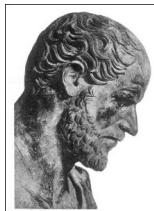
Projected onto the sky, we have RGM!

Link to see Video Demonstration 1:49
http://youtu.be/72FrZz_zJFU

The complicated made more simple...

Old Dead Guys that Rock Your World, Part I

(They look quaint now, but they were passionate people with great minds, hopes, and dreams)



Aristotle

→
400 yrs



Ptolemy

→
1400 yrs



Copernicus

Aristotle – proposed geocentric model, heavens are perfect and unchanging, perfection is found in circles and spheres

Ptolemy – built on geocentric model to explain apparent backward motion (called retrograde motion) of planets by adding constant motion rotating circles on Aristotle's celestial spheres (a very complex explanation!)

Copernicus – proposed heliocentric model, which explains retrograde motion as a natural consequence of our perspective on a sun-orbiting earth. Still adopted Aristotle's perfect unchanging cosmos by adopting circular orbits with constant velocity

Part I Summary: Copernicus Stirred a Scientific Revolution

To Ptolemy, it became painfully obvious that the constant motion circle thing wasn't working so well to explain motions of planets as seen on the sky...

After much study, Ptolemy added circles on circles on circles to Aristotle's model... modern science was being born... observations were driving the models to complicated extremes and **something had to give**.

After all, a highly complicated universe is not consistent with Aristotle's premise of beauty, symmetry, and simplicity- so which view do you chose to believe?

Copernicus was a game changer... he proposed a radically different universe with a **simple and symmetric** explanation for the retrograde motion, but he could not explain planetary motion any more *accurately* than Ptolemy because (in reality) planets do not move at constant speeds in circular orbits!.

The change from the geocentric model to a heliocentric model is an example of a **paradigm shift**. Our picture of the universe is completely different than it was.

1. Humanity is no longer the center of the universe! *Oh, the implications!*
2. The notion that rational thought alone could unlock nature was dying quickly- **but the notion of simplicity and beauty still survives to this day.**

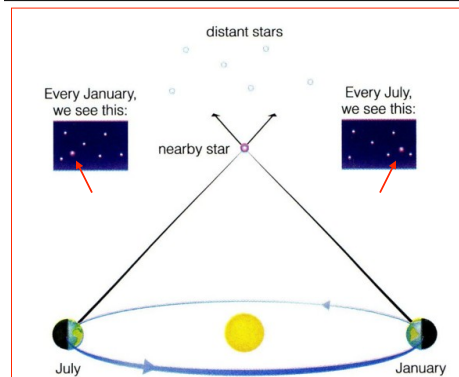
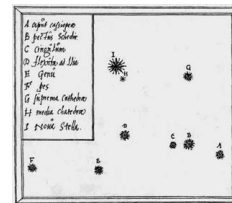
Tycho Brahe ~1575 AD The Heavens are not Unchanging!



Brahe was *the* man of precise measurements...

He use **parallax** to show that a comet (a transient event!) was farther away from Earth than the Moon, and not part of the Earth's upper atmosphere... the comet was heavenly.

Profound Implications:
Objects in the heavens CAN change with time!



WHAT IS PARALLAX?

- the **apparent** motion of relatively nearby objects relative to more distant ones **due to the Earth's motion around the Sun...**

Works only if Earth moves position with time...

Does not occur in the geocentric model!!

Link to see Video Demonstration: 0:43
<http://youtu.be/oQYcZvh2JHw>

Kepler ~ 1620 AD - God is the Great Geometer



Brahe's decades of precise measurements of the positions and motions of the planets were so good, that Kepler could really make some headway on a model of the "universe".

Kepler believed in Aristotle's simplicity and beauty... but he adopted Copernicus' heliocentric model and then extended Aristotle's "celestial sphere" model to explain the planet's orbits using geometric solids...

Kepler placed a sphere inside a triangle (3 sides), and a sphere outside the triangle, then a square (4 sides) outside that sphere with a sphere outside the square. He placed a octahedron (8 sides) outside that sphere, and on and on, using the five geometric solids to place his spheres around. This gave him six spheres and at the time there were only six planets. He explained why only six planets!

The sized of the planet orbits were very well described by the radii of the spheres! It was a successful model, and was based upon solid scientific data and previous ideas.

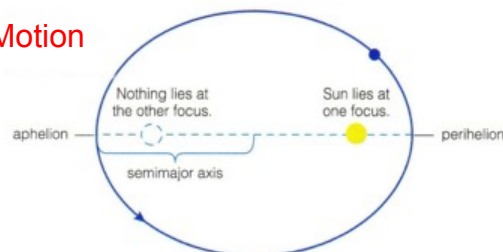
But... he was wrong. For one, there are more than six planets!
He got something else very right, though!



Kepler- Laws of Planetary Motion

Thanks to Brahe's awesome data, Kepler is responsible for the death of the circle and constant motion in the heavens.

First, Kepler hypothesized that planet orbits trace out the shape of an ellipse, with the Sun at one of the focus points.



■ Kepler's first law: The orbit of each planet about the Sun is an ellipse with the Sun at one focus.

Keplers 1st Law:

Planet's orbit the sun on an ellipse. The sun is located at one of the focus points.

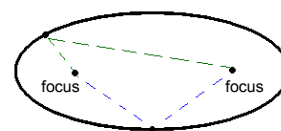


Circles have one focus in the center
 Ellipses have two focus points

Aphelion – farthest reach from the Sun
 Perihelion – nearest approach to the Sun



A circle. All lines from the center to the edge are the same length.



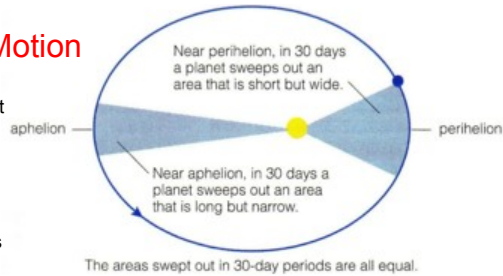
An ellipse. The two green lines, added together, are the same total length as the two blue ones, added together.

Kepler- Laws of Planetary Motion

Second, Kepler saw in Brahe's data that the planets do not move in constant motions, but that they move fastest along their orbits at perihelion, and slowest when at aphelion.

The relation between distance and velocity follows from the principle of the **conservation of angular momentum**... the product of the planets velocity times its distance from the sun is a constant at all points along the orbit...

$velocity \times distance = constant$



The areas swept out in 30-day periods are all equal.

b Kepler's second law: As a planet moves around its orbit, it sweeps out equal areas in equal times. This means that it moves faster when near the Sun and slower when farther from the Sun.

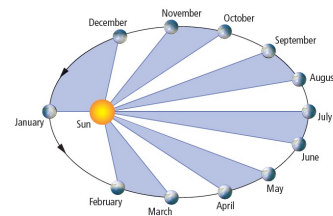
Keplers 2nd Law:

A line connecting the sun and planet sweeps out equal areas in equal time intervals.

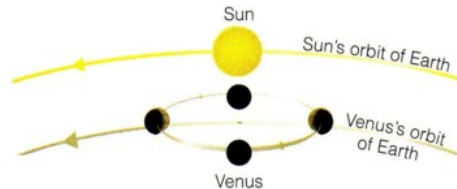
Link to see Video Demonstration: 0:29

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rH8cHu4sLM>

Constant Angular Momentum



Galileo ~ 1630 AD Father of Modern Science

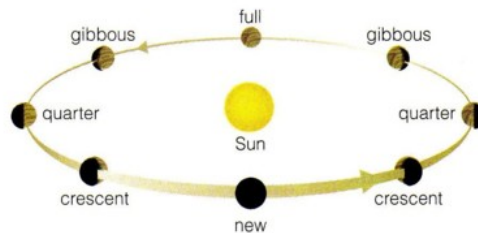


a In the Ptolemaic system, Venus follows a circle upon a circle that keeps it close to the Sun in our sky. Therefore, its phases would range only from new to crescent.

Though Copernicus proposed a heliocentric model, it was not yet accepted as a better model than Aristotle's and Ptolemy's geocentric model...

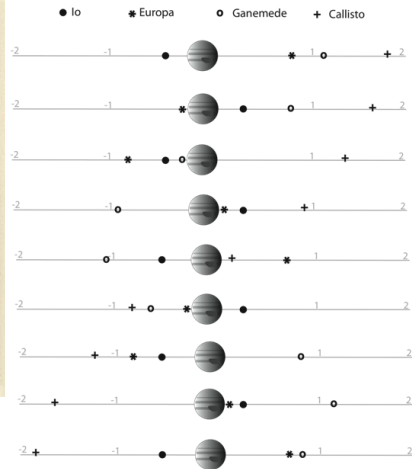
Galileo was the first to use the telescope for astronomy and take careful notes. **Father of Modern Science** bestowed upon him for beginning the era of "observation driven" science.

His observations of the phases of Venus disproved the geocentric model once and for all.



b Galileo observed Venus go through a complete set of phases and therefore proved that it orbits the Sun.

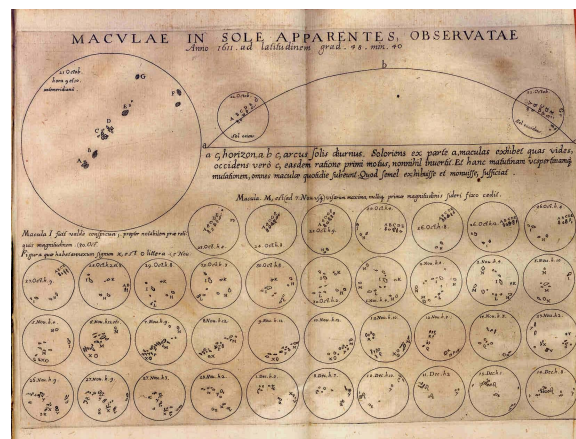
Galileo ~ 1630 AD Father of Modern Science



Galileo also discovered moons orbiting Jupiter.

This showed that there are unique systems in the universe that have their own center and this demonstrated that not everything orbited the earth- thereby further challenging the geocentric model

Galileo ~ 1630 AD Father of Modern Science



Galileo also discovered sunspots. He charted how these sunspots changed with time!

This means that objects in the heavens are not perfect and unchanging, which challenged Aristotle's view of a perfect unchanging heavens.

Old Dead Guys that Rock Your World, Part II



Brahe



Kepler



Galileo

Tycho Brahe – used parallax to show comet was outside Earth atmosphere and made 1000s of precise measurements of the positions of astronomical objects

Kepler – adopted Copernican heliocentric model, used Brahe's data to show planets orbit with varying velocities along ellipses (formulated Kepler's Laws of Planetary Motion).

Galileo – first to use telescope on the sky, provided strong support for Copernican model by discovering moons of Jupiter and showing phases of Venus contradict Aristotle's geocentric model; also discovered sunspots

Part II Summary: Tycho, Kepler, Galileo blow things open

The Copernican Revolution, with...

Tycho's precise observations, that led to...

Kepler's Laws of Planetary Motion (with the sun at the center), and...

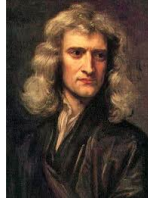
Galileo's observations of Jupiter's multi-moon system ...

rekindled the debate on a plurality of worlds (that were imperfect and changing), and thus rekindled the debate on life elsewhere in the universe.

Nonetheless, no data were available to resolve these fiercely emotional debates. In 1600, Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake for claiming life in the universe.

After Galileo, the path for modern science was opened. Humanity had experienced its first PARADIGM SHIFT following Copernicus's hypothesis as backed up by Galileo's observations. Additional paradigm shifts were to follow...

The Story of Space and Time



Isaac Newton

Formulated theory of motion- time is a universal constant across all space

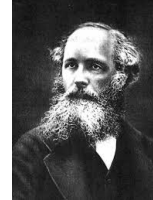
$F=ma$ -> forces (F) cause a mass (m) to accelerate (a)

"Once positions and velocities of all particles in the universe are initialized by God, then forces cause the universe to unfold in a manner completely predetermined."

The velocity one measures for an object depends upon the velocity of the observer

Formulated theory of light (electromagnetism) - time is a universal constant across all space

$c=(\epsilon\mu)^{-1/2}$ -> the speed of light is given by the permittivity of space to electric perturbations



James Clerk Maxwell

"Light travels at a constant speed throughout all space."

The velocity one measures for light does **not** depend upon the velocity of the observer

The Story of Space and Time



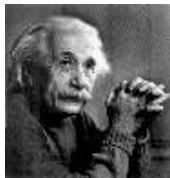
Newton



Maxwell

Newton and Maxwell contradict each other!

"If I travel at the speed of light in the same direction as the light, Newton says I should see light standing still. But Maxwell says that cannot happen!" – Einstein (age 16)



Einstein

Postulates (cannot be proven)

1. Light is a constant speed for all observers
2. The laws of physics are the same for all observers

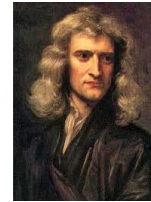
PARADIGM SHIFT:

Einstein finds that time cannot be a universal constant, but depends upon both an observer's velocity and distance to the clock (time is not a constant throughout all space)!

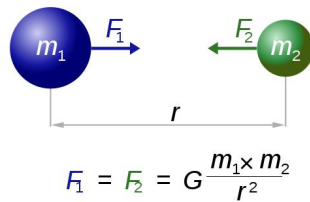
Here is a 10 minute movie illustrating this... <http://youtu.be/IVuF5zrwMLY>
(totally worth watching)

The Story of Gravity

Using his laws of motion, Newton discovered that gravity was a force that depended on the product of the masses and the inverse of the square of the distance between the masses



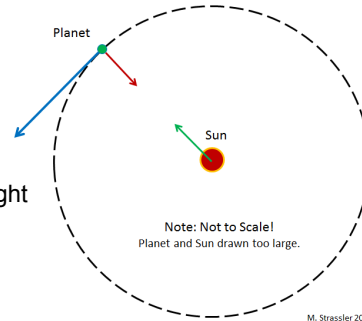
Isaac Newton



The force is always directed along a straight line between the planet and the sun.

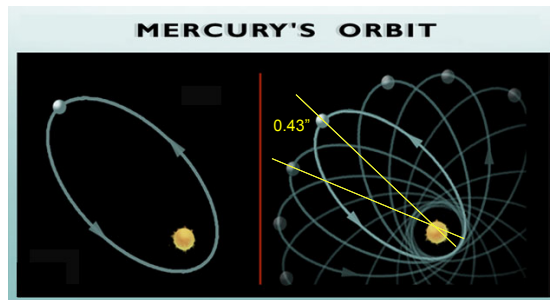
From this, he theoretically derived all of Kepler's Laws of planetary motion!

Planets orbit in ellipses and have constant angular momentum!



The Story of Gravity

According to Newton and Kepler, the orientation of the orbital path is fixed in space; the ellipse stays fixed in space



Mercury's orbit was observed to "precess", i.e., shift in position by about 0.43" per century

After vain searches for gravitational perturbation by another planet, people suspected Newton was not entirely correct

Link to see Video Demonstration: 0:10
<http://youtu.be/D-6xJlRex9M>

Since Einstein knew that space AND time were interwoven, he suspected that "warping" of spacetime was the reason; after 10 years of work he developed his **General Theory of Relativity**- a new view of gravity and the universe

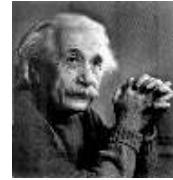
Link to see Video Demonstration: 4:54
<http://youtu.be/hSXNE0pNtr8>

The Story of Gravity

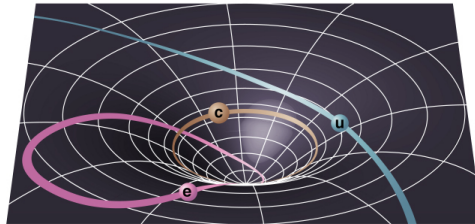
Einstein's theory predicted the precession right on the money!

PARADIGM SHIFT: Objects do not feel a force of "gravity", they move along the curvature of spacetime

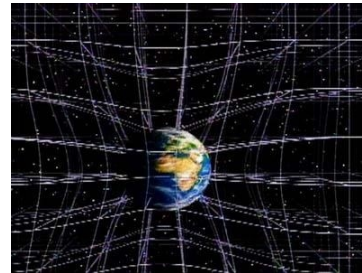
This also predicts that everything follows the curvature, even light- so light rays take curved paths around stars! This predicted **black holes**, where light cannot escape the intense curvature of spacetime



Einstein



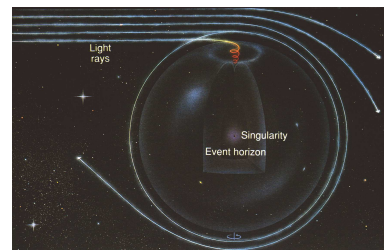
A 2-dimensional representation of the spacetime warp around sun



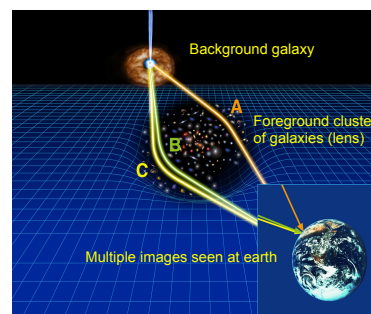
A 3-dimensional representation of the spacetime warp around earth

Black Holes

Light rays take curved paths around stars! This predicted black holes, where light cannot escape the intense curvature of spacetime.

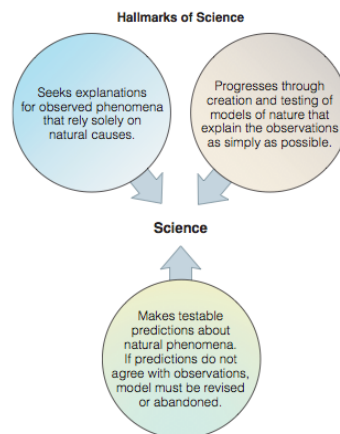


Cosmic Gravitational Lensing



The Three Hallmarks of Modern Science

1. Modern science seeks explanations for observed phenomena that rely solely on natural causes.

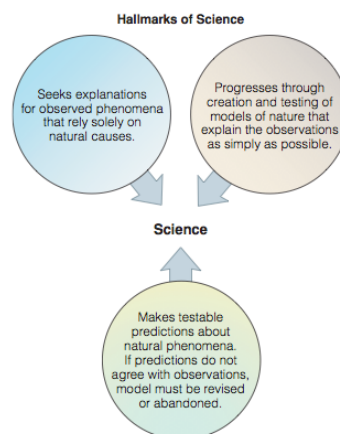


Modern science is also driven by a belief that the world is inherently simple, beautiful, and understandable.

“The most incomprehensible thing in the universe is that it is comprehensible.” - A. Einstein

The Three Hallmarks of Modern Science

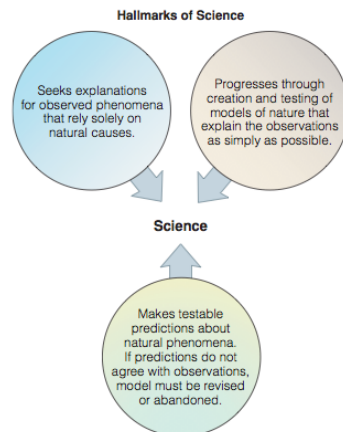
2. Science progresses through the creation and testing of models designed to explain observations, and these models should be as simple as possible, and be as consistent with a rational understanding of other aspects of science



***Occum's Razor** – the principle that the simplest hypothesis/model is probably closest to the truth of nature.*

The Three Hallmarks of Modern Science

3. A scientific model should be testable with observations so that we can always envision further ways to check its validity or, if need be, to conclude it is incorrect.



Recall – nothing can be proven correct, only to be consistent with a model or theory

But hypotheses and theories can always be disproven at anytime, once they are shown to be inconsistent with observations.

The Scientific Method

Knowledge is now obtained not by rational thought alone, but by a process of fine tuning that can never end

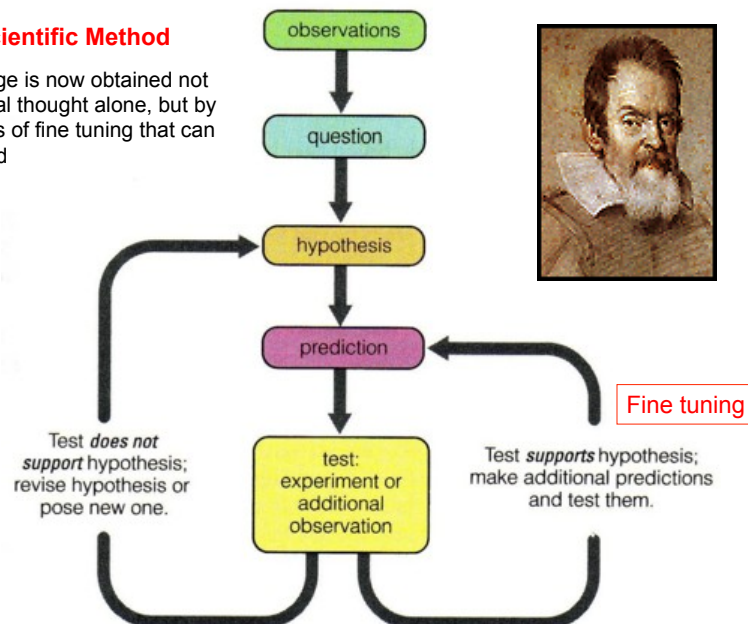


FIGURE 2.11 This diagram illustrates the basic process of hypothesis-driven science.