

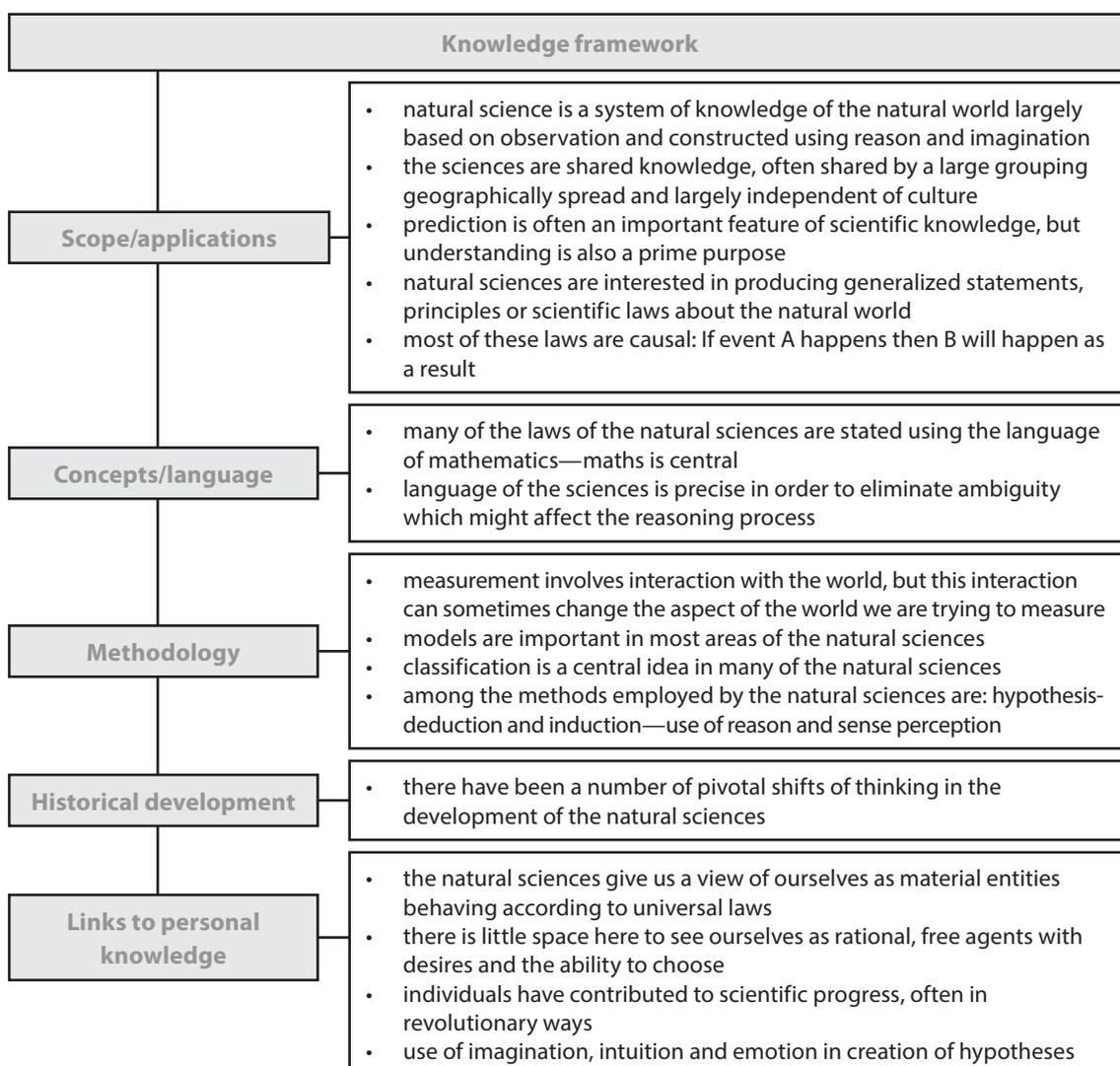
## Natural sciences

*What does it mean for a discipline to be a science? Is there just one scientific method? Should there be ethical constraints on the pursuit of scientific knowledge?*

The natural sciences seek to discover laws of nature—regularities in the natural world. These are often causal relationships of the form “if X happens then Y will be the result”. This description implies that there is an attempt to produce a system of knowledge that is independent of human agency. Whether this is indeed possible is a matter of debate.

The methods of the natural sciences based on observation of the world as a means of testing hypotheses about it are designed to reduce the effects of human desires, expectations and preferences, in other words they are considered objective. In this sense, the natural sciences emphasize the role of empirical inquiry: scientific knowledge must be able to withstand the test of experience and experiment.

One interesting area of discussion is what differentiates the scientific from the non-scientific. Many would suggest that it is the methods used in science. It is therefore interesting to consider what it is about these methods that mean that the knowledge they generate is often regarded as more reliable than those employed by other AOKs.



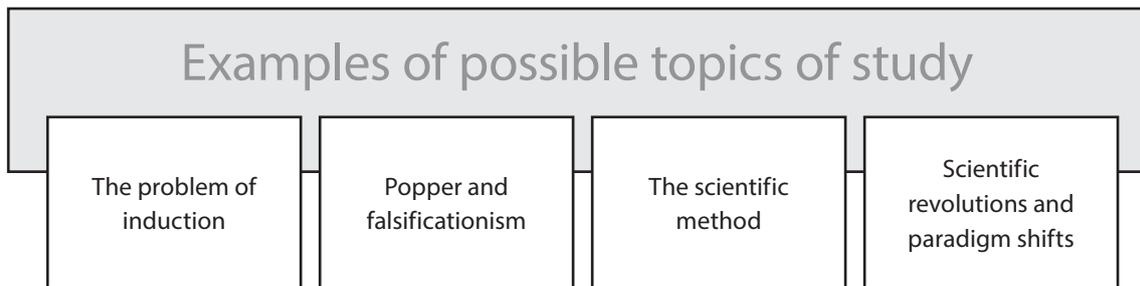
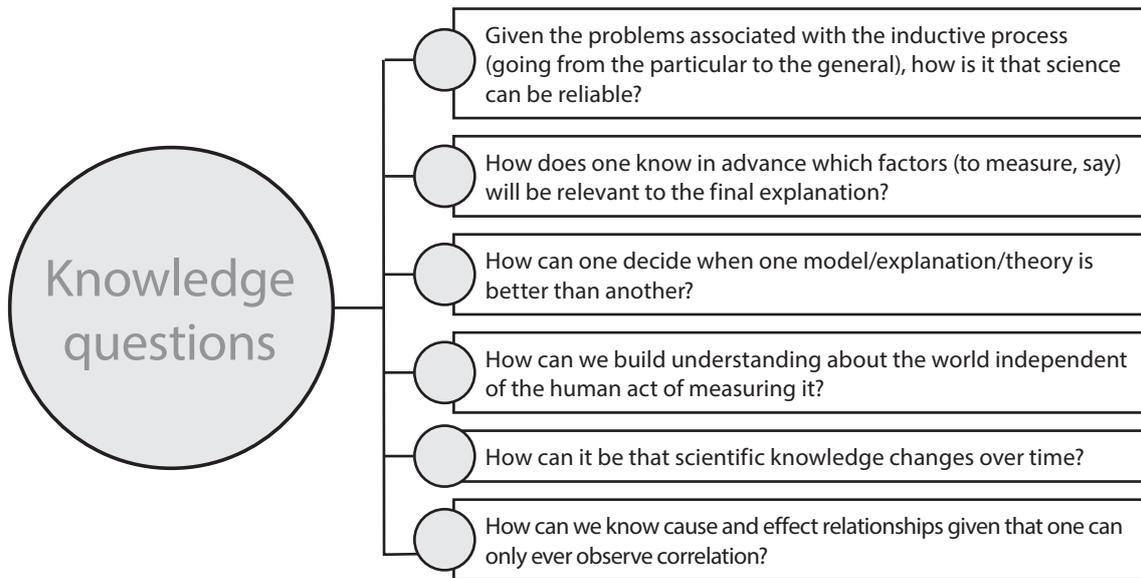


Figure 12