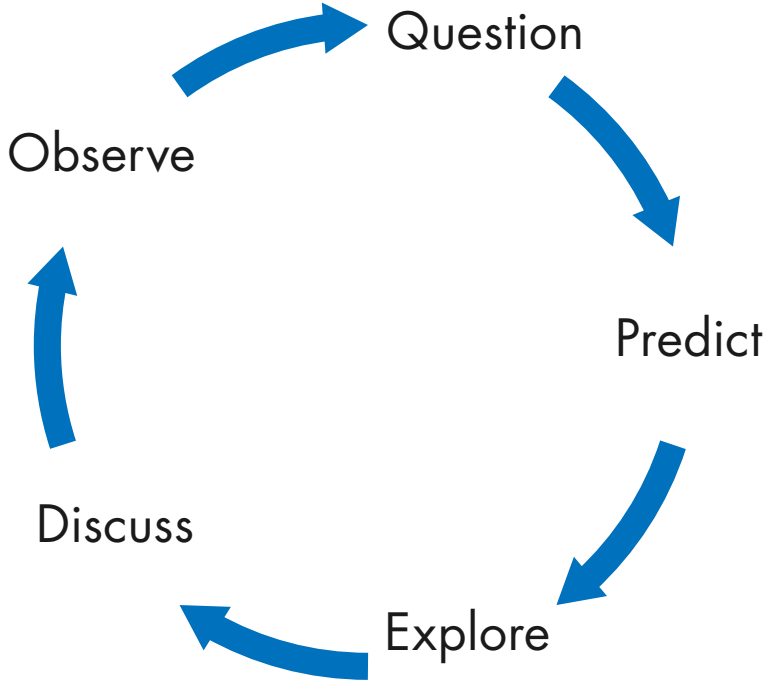
THE INQUIRY CYCLE



The cycle of inquiry (or scientific method) is a thinking tool – not a specific activity. This tool leads us through the process of questioning, exploring, predicting, discussing, and observing something of interest.

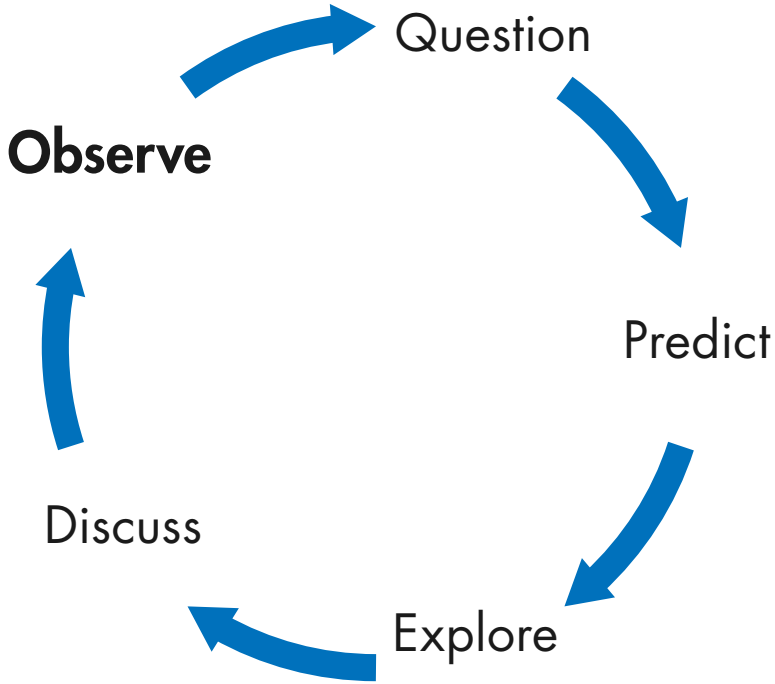
Curiosity and asking questions (inquiry) is what helps children to learn about the world around them. Inquiry builds critical thinking skills and supports problem solving across the domains of learning and development, which is key to children's school readiness and independent learning throughout life.

Tips for supporting the inquiry cycle:

- Remember the inquiry cycle is not always straightforward. We move back and forth through the steps because we might notice something new or realize we have a new question after exploring more.
- Adjust your questions to match a child's current level of receptive and expressive language and/or English.
- Children develop their comprehension and communication skills as they make predictions, plan explorations, describe findings, document observations, and explain their reasoning (e.g., "Why did it happen?").

Tips for supporting the inquiry cycle with children who are dual language learners (DLLs):

- Allow children to communicate in the language(s) in which they feel most comfortable, to support curiosity and questioning.
- Keep in mind that children who are DLLs may be actively engaged by listening to others' observation but may not feel confident to respond in English.
- Encourage children to ask questions in their home language whenever possible. However, if you do not know the home language, provide visual aids that children can use to communicate their thinking.


Question
Predict
Explore
Discuss
Observe

OBSERVE

What do you see/hear?

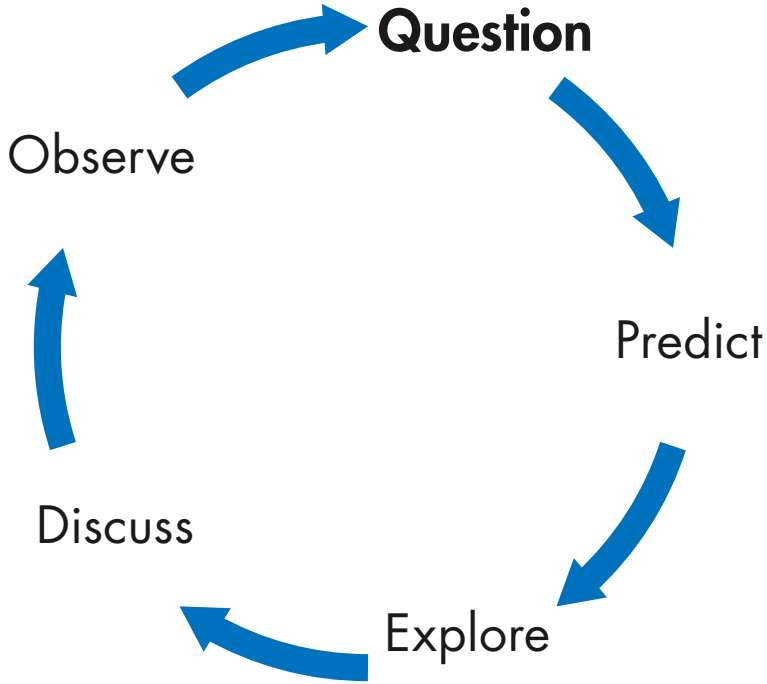
How do they sound/smell?

How are they the same?

How are they different?

What happens when you try?

You seem curious about. . .


Question
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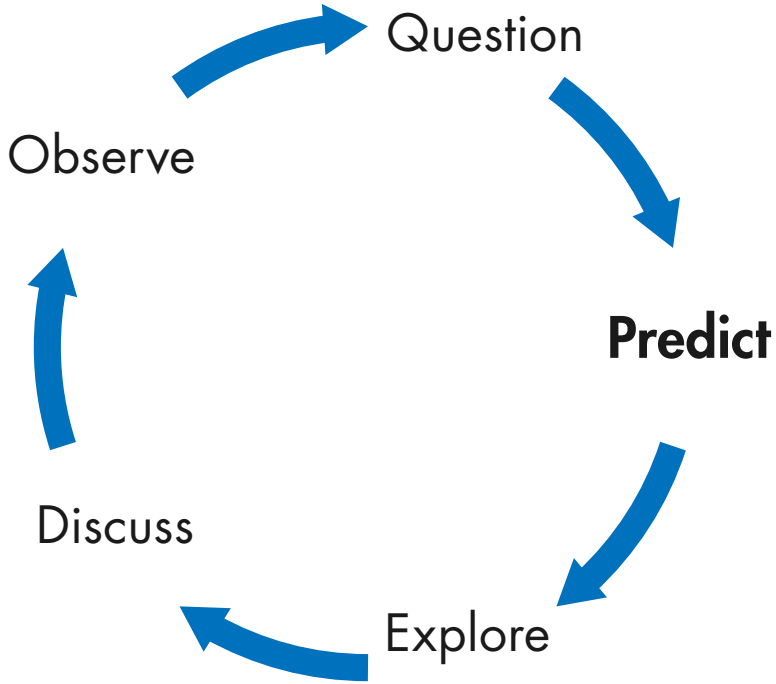
QUESTION

What are you curious about?

What do you want to know?

Are you wondering if. . . ?


Question
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Observe

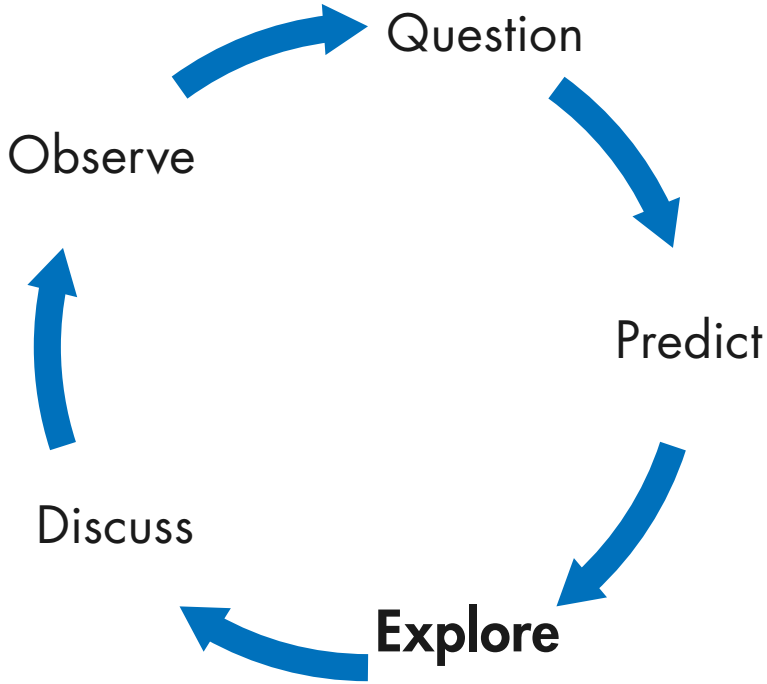
PREDICT

What do you think will happen?

What are your predictions?

Why do you think that?

How could we find out?


Question
Predict
Explore
Discuss
Observe

EXPLORE

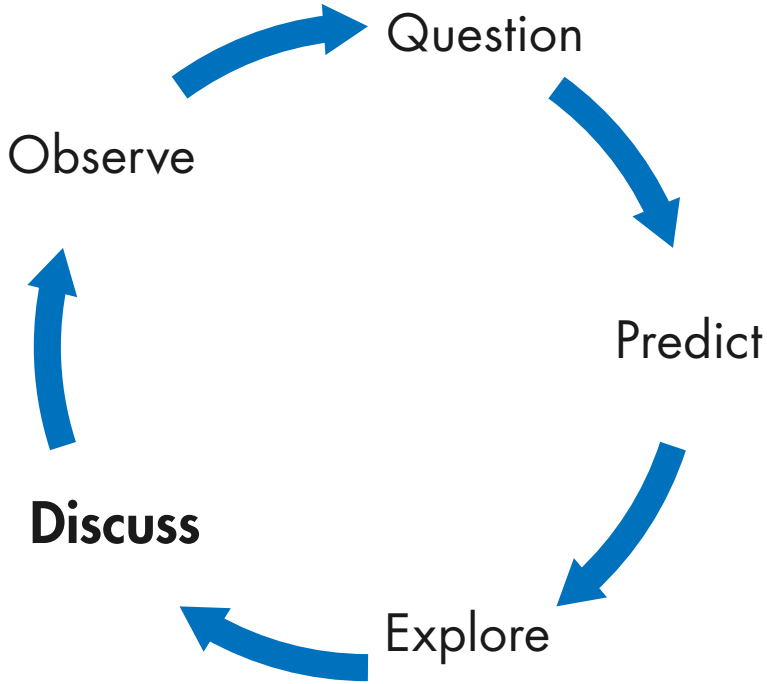
Let's investigate!

What do you notice?

What is changing?

What did you try?

Let's draw what we see.


Question
Predict
Explore
Discuss
Observe

DISCUSS

What were your predictions?

What happened?

What did you notice?

Why do you think that happened?

What could we investigate next?

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