



## Summing up science and society

In this section, we've seen that society shapes the path of science in many different ways. Society helps determine how its resources are deployed to fund scientific work, encouraging some sorts of research and discouraging others. Similarly, scientists are directly influenced by the interests and needs of society and often direct their research towards topics that will serve society. And at the most basic level, society shapes scientists' expectations, values, beliefs, and goals—all of which factor into the questions they choose to pursue and how they investigate those questions.



Drilling for ice core samples along the Arctic Ocean to study climate change.

### GET INVOLVED

Even if you don't spend your days sequencing DNA, conducting particle accelerator experiments, or analyzing the composition of rocks, you can still influence the path of science with your actions every day. How? Here are some suggestions for getting more involved with scientific research:

- **Change how funding agencies distribute research funds.** For example, if you wanted to encourage research into alternative energy sources, you could write your congressperson to let him or her know what research you'd like to see government agencies fund.
- **Support research.** For example, if you wanted science to find a cure for juvenile diabetes, you could support a foundation that promotes research on the disease.
- **Help with data collection and analysis.** Some scientific research projects are actively seeking your help as a volunteer. For example, during your home computer's downtime, you could offer up its computing power to chemists at Stanford to help perform calculations about protein shapes. Or you could help astronomers by making backyard observations of variable stars. For more information about getting involved with scientific research through volunteering, check out organizations like [DistributedComputing.info](http://DistributedComputing.info) and [Citizen Science](http://CitizenScience.org).

Here, we've seen how society influences science. But what about the reverse? How does science influence society? To find out, read on ...