

“Case #23459-093-09”

Forensic Science Activity

The Mystery of the

MATERIALS

- Case folders (1 per group)
- Evidence bags (handwriting sample, bite impressions, fingerprint sheets)
- Magnifying glasses
- Ruler
- Tracing paper

S.S.S. Addressed

S.C.C. 2.3

S.C.F. 1.3
2.3

S.C.H. 1.3
2.3
3.3

M.A.A. 4.4
5.4

M.A.E. 3.4

The idea of using forensics to teach scientific method has been gaining popularity in recent years, partially due to several successful TV shows dealing with similar material.

Students will be playing the role of a CSI-styled forensic science team that has been tasked with investigating two potential crimes: a murder and a forged check.

This activity is designed to be as open-ended and student driven as possible. Student groups will be given a

case folder containing all evidence and affidavits pertaining to the case. Measurement equipment (microscopes, tape measures, etc.) are provided, but there are no student directions to perform specific tasks on the pieces of evidence.

With such a wide variety of techniques being used in the classroom, focus on challenging students to explain their reasons for the choices

they make. Those explanations are much more valuable than just allowing them to find the “right” answer.

The evidence itself is designed in such a way that students will decide on their BEST interpretation, but no one piece of evidence should be strong enough to definitively assign guilt.



Fingerprints are only one of many types of evidence examined by forensic scientists

Activity Directions

Students will be playing the role of an investigative team processing and analyzing evidence from a crime scene,

Students will receive a case folder containing all of the printed evidence (witness

testimony, fingerprints, scene diagram, etc.). Groups will also be given a bag containing evidence samples (matchbooks, handwriting, and bite marks).

Students are to completely process the evidence, write a narrative to explain their conclusions, and defend their conclu-

sions to the grand jury (class).

Individual directions for each section of the activity are written on the following pages.

Stress to the students the importance of justifying their findings over simply finding the right answer.

“Case #23459-093-09” **Student Activity Sheet**

Use this section to record your findings:

FINGERPRINT: Crime scene fingerprint came from _____ because of:

A.

B.

HANDWRITING: It was determined that _____ forged the victim’s name on the check through the use of _____ and _____ (list the 2 methods used)

BITE MARK: It was determined that _____ bit the victim because :

FRACTURE MARKS: The burnt match was torn from the book belonging to _____ based on visual inspection.

OFFICIAL DEPOSITION: In the space below, write your official crime scene analysis, basing any INFERENCES on your OBSERVATIONS of your evidence. As in any “real life” criminal investigation, the actual series of events may never be fully known for certain. This statement will represent your official report of WHAT HAPPENED based on the evidence.