

Collecting Evidence

Phenomenal Images



Forensic evidence is defined as “criminal evidence acquired through scientific methods” and may include things like:

- Biological material
- Fibers
- Paint chips
- Glass
- Soil and vegetation
- Accelerants
- Fingerprints
- Hair
- Impression evidence
- Fracture patterns
- Narcotics

Look closely at the photographs above. List a few things you notice about the crime scene investigators collecting evidence.

Why do you think crime scene investigators dress this way? Respond in 2-3 sentences.

What is the main reason that the investigators are wearing protective gear that covers their mouths, hands, feet, and bodies? Discuss with your group, then record your answer in 2-3 sentences below.

Forensic approaches, like those used in a crime scene investigation, ***can also be used in natural settings*** to help scientists understand aspects of the natural environment.

Consider this Scenario:

While working in the field, researchers encounter scat (pictured below) on a trail where camera traps (a camera trap is a motion-triggered camera, often attached to a tree) have photographed various mammal species, including deer, raccoon, black bear, bobcat, red fox, and coyote.



In your group, discuss potential clues about the organism that could be obtained by observing and analyzing the scat. List the clues in the box below.

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Write 3 questions about the organism that could be answered by observing the scat directly in the field.

Write 3 questions about the organism that could be answered by analyzing scat in the laboratory.

In 2-3 sentences, describe how you think field observations and laboratory analyses help researchers better understand an ecosystem.