

DON'T TOUCH THE EVIDENCE

A Lab on Crime Scene Evaluation at WFHS

Objective

You will draw rough and final sketches of a crime scene, and explain the scene to your classmates.

Background Information

This morning a murder was committed. The victim was identified as a 17-year-old, single, female. At 7:00 A.M., the morning custodian discovered her. The victim was laying face down when she was found. None of the other items at the scene were disturbed.

Materials

- Pencil
- Black or Blue Pen (for final drawing)
- White Paper / Graph Paper
- Notebook
- Tape measure
- Compass
- Ruler
- Prepared crime scene

Procedure – Part 1: Rough Drawing of Crime Scene

1. Accompany your partners to the room where the crime was committed.
2. Identify all items in the room that you believe to be physical evidence. Also note the victim on the floor.
3. Calculate locations of physical evidence for your drawing by the following method:
 - a. Use the tape measure to determine the width and length of the room. Record these measurements in Data Table 1 (in your lab notebook).
 - b. Use a compass to determine which walls are north, south, east, and west.
 - c. Select two fixed points in the room that are relatively close to one of the pieces of physical evidence. All victims of the crime and objects that seem out of place should be recorded as physical evidence. (Triangulation Method)
 - d. Measure the distance (in inches) from one of the objects to the first fixed point. Record the name of the object and its location and distance from the fixed points in Data Table 2 (in your lab notebook).

4. Repeat this procedure for all other pieces of physical evidence in the room. You do not have to use the same fixed point each time. You can change points when you change from one object to the next.
5. Using the entries you made in the data table as a guide, sketch the crime scene. As you work, follow these directions:
 - a. Draw the room in which the crime occurred. Allow your sketch of the room to take up at least one-half of the paper.
 - b. Indicate North on your sketch of the room.
 - c. Draw all doors and windows in their proper locations.
 - d. Use squares or circles to represent the locations of different objects in the room. Draw larger objects with larger squares or circles. For example, a table should be larger than a chair.
 - e. Label each piece of physical evidence with a number. At the bottom of the page, list each number and describe the item it identifies.
 - f. Beginning with Object 1, draw a light line from one of the fixed points you chose earlier to Object 1. Draw a light line from the other fixed point to Object 1. (see example)
 - g. Write the actual distances above the light lines on the drawing. These are the same distances you recorded in Data Table 2.
 - h. Repeat steps **F** and **G** for all pieces of physical evidence in the room.

Procedure, Part 2: Final Drawing and Presentation

1. Use the "rough" sketch you made of the crime scene to draw a polished, final sketch. The final sketch will be used as evidence in a "trial."
2. The final sketch should:
 - a. Be neatly drawn with black ink or blue ink on a piece of white paper or graph paper.
 - b. Be drawn to scale. For example, in your drawing, you could make 1/4 inch equal 12 inches of space in the room. In other words, if you measured the crime scene room to be 384 inches wide and 336 inches long, you would draw this room 8 inches wide and 7 inches long.
 - c. Label North on the drawing.
 - d. Draw the squares and circles that represent physical evidence in proportion to each other. For instance, the female body should be drawn larger than the circle or square representing a knife; the tables should be larger than the body and the chairs, etc.

- e. Your drawing should contain all information in the rough sketch.
 - f. Create a hypothesis based on the physical evidence identified.
3. With your investigative team, present your final sketch and hypothesis.

Postlab Questions:

1. Describe any weapons found at the scene of the crime and their locations in the room.
2. Describe any furniture that was upturned or items that appeared out of their normal locations.
3. Why were you asked to use fixed points in your drawings?
4. Why do you think you did not make your polished sketch at the crime scene?
5. What was your hypothesis about how the crime was committed?

Data Table 1

Measurements of room where crime occurred

Length of room	Width of room

Data Table 2

Measurements of physical evidence from fixed points

Name of object	Fixed point 1	Distance of object from fixed point 1	Fixed point 2	Distance of object from fixed point 2
Ex: Broken eyeglasses	Doorknob on front door	218 inches	Corner where front wall meets wall on East side of room	102 inches