Who Wrote It? Handwriting Analysis

Sections

Joey Scouts | Cub Scouts | **Scouts** | **Venturer Scouts** | **Rover Scouts**

Scouts VICTORIA

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Challenge Areas

COMMUNITY | CREATIVE | OUTDOOR | PERSONAL GROWTH

Scout Method Elements

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT | LEARNING BY DOING | NATURE AND THE OUTDOORS | PROMISE AND LAW | PERSONAL PROGRESSION | PATROL SYSTEM

SYMBOLIC FRAMEWORK | YOUTH LEADING, ADULTS SUPPORTING

SPICES Growth Areas

CHARACTER | EMOTIONAL | **INTELLECTUAL** | PHYSICAL | SOCIAL | SPIRITUAL

The Adventure

Take a more in-depth look at handwriting and how it can be used to aid in criminal investigations.

Plan

1. Investigate handwriting analysis, its history, and what features can be used. What aspects influence someone's handwriting?
2. Investigate the use of handwriting in criminal investigations. What are its strengths and weaknesses?
3. Investigate what other factors might be able to be used to find the source of a questioned document.
4. Read the safety information and discuss with your leaders or another appropriate adult what safety equipment, precautions, and supervision may be required. Ensure that you have these safety measures in place before starting the ‘Do’ section.
5. Gather all the equipment that you need to make your fingerprint analysis experience. You will need: paper and pens.

Do

1. Have someone else collect a selection of handwriting samples from different people, making sure that there are two from the same person. Ideally, they should all be written in different pens and look like a range of different sources.
2. Carefully look at the features of each sample and see if you can match which two were written by the same person. Make sure to look at factors such as:
   - The size and spacing of the letters
   - Any slant to the writing?
   - Is the writing in script or cursive?
   - Are rounded letters such as o, a, g, and, b properly closed?
   - How are the dots on the i's done? How about the crosses on the t's?
   - If commonly looped letters such as g, l, and y have been looped?
   - Are there any uniquely formed letter?
   - Does the pen pressure appear to be consistent? Is it heavy or light?
   - If there are numbers that are commonly written in different ways, such as 1, 4, and 7, how are written?
3. Make sure to record your observations as you go.

Review

1. Were you able to match the samples?
2. What did you find tricky about handwriting analysis?
3. Do you think handwriting analysis is subjective or objective?
4. What do you think you could do differently to make the handwriting easier to analyse?

Variations

- This Challenge Card can pair well with other forensics activities and Challenge Cards to make a 'Whodunnit' night. It pairs especially well with 'Who Wrote It? Paper Chromatography'
- Depending on the section and challenge area used, this challenge card can also be paired with a police station visit or some other law enforcement related community involvement.