



FSP05

CRIME SCENE

Teacher Background Information

The crime scene from the following scenario has been photographed at Fremantle Primary School in Western Australia. The “crime scene” is available in an online format or you may want to recreate the scene (or your own scene) in your classroom.

Solving the crime requires students to be able to carry out a range of activities. The approach to the module is to firstly do the activity, develop a library of standards and then use the standards to investigate the unknown “crime scene sample”.

The activities do not require sophisticated equipment.

Samples of evidence from the crime scene (fingerprints, shoe impressions) are available in the student’s Crime Dossier (**FSP26**).

Actual Scenario

There have been a few problems at Tree View Primary School lately. Along with losing the sports carnival to their archivals, Gully View Primary School, some things have been going missing like money from school bags. Ms Thomas is a teacher of year 6 and she is very keen on plants. She recently received a potted azalea from a grateful parent that takes pride of place on her desk.

Anyway, to try and get things going well again, Ms Thomas’s class is going on an excursion. Ms Thomas has been collecting the money for the excursion every day for a week and has been putting it in an envelope in her desk drawer. But, when Ms Thomas arrives for work on Friday morning – the day of the excursion – the classroom is a mess and appears to have been broken into and the money is gone.

One of the windows has been broken and glass is found both on the classroom floor and in the garden outside the window. There is also a large shoe print in the garden near the glass. A chair has been turned upside-down; there is some dirt on the floor near the chair and on the desk. The desk drawer is open and the envelope that had the money in it has a message scrawled on it that says, “ha, ha, fooled you!” On the blackboard there is message written in chalk that says “ha, ha, fooled you!” On close examination there is some white powder on the desk and some white fingerprints left on the paper-punch on Ms Thomas desk.

Ms Thomas gets all of the students into the classroom and asks if anyone knows anything about the missing money and the break-in. Everybody denies taking the money so an investigation is launched.

Several suspects are identified – including three students, two who had stayed back late in the classroom for bad behavior, the teacher and the cleaner who has access to the room.



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Evidence that can be collected:

- message on blackboard,
- hand written message on the money envelope (black text),
- fingerprints on the paper punch on the desk,
- some white powder on the desk
- 2 large shoe prints outside the window
 - one facing towards the window and
 - one leading away from the window,
- dirt on the classroom floor,
- fingerprints on the door,
- fingerprint on the upturned chair, and
- glass fragments.

Activities that students can do based on the evidence include:

- handwriting analyses,
- ink chromatography,
- unknown powder analysis,
- fingerprinting,
- impressions,
- soil pH analysis,
- anthropometry calculations, and
- event reconstruction.

Information provided to students about the scenario:

Mr Hill, the school cleaner, came to work at about 6.30am on Friday morning. As he arrived, he saw someone riding away from the school on a bicycle very fast. He said that they skidded around the corner. He didn't get a good look at the person, as it was still quite dark. He thinks that the person was not very tall, he estimated approximately 140cm, and was wearing dark clothing and a hood. Although he saw that the classroom had been broken into he thought he shouldn't touch anything.

Suspects:

There are four main suspects in this case.

Ms T the class teacher has access to the classroom and of course knew that money was in the envelope. No real known motive.

Mr Hill is the school cleaner and is around the school grounds when the school is empty of other people, early in the morning and late at night. He has a set of keys to all classrooms. He is not a very happy person and seems to be always grumbling. He is known to despise the Year 6 class and disapproves of "fun" in the classroom including excursions. He spends quite a lot of time in the school's garden shed playing "battleships", a paper-based game that he uses a black texta pen for.

Ciara is a student in the Year 6 class. She eats a lot of chocolates and lollies and always seems to have money to spend in the tuckshop. Although not really naughty, she had to stay in after school the day before the break-in. She was very unhappy about doing this.

Tim is a nice boy but is a bit silly. He loves to play jokes on people but sometimes doesn't think about the consequences. When he was in Year 5 he got into quite a bit of trouble with one of his "jokes" that backfired.

Rupert is a Year 7 student who has been known to bully the younger kids for money. He had also been kept in for bad behavior on Thursday afternoon.

Suspect	Photo	Height (cm)	Age (years)	Fingerprints	Shoeprint	Handwriting
Ms Thomas (Teacher)						
Mr Hill (Cleaner)						
Clara (Student)						
Tim (Student)						
Rupert (Student)						



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What has actually happened?

Mr Hill did it!

He has entered through the door with his own keys and goes over to the window which he breaks (leaving glass on the outside), to suggest that the burglar has come through there. He goes over to the blackboard, picks up a stick of dusty white chalk and writes on the board in large letters "ha ha fooled you!" He then goes to the teacher's desk and opens the drawer and takes the money.

He shifts the paper punch to clear an area to write. He then takes a pen and paper and in his most childlike handwriting writes a note on the envelope (ha, ha, fooled you!). He upturns a chair. He sprinkles some soil from the azalea pot plant on the desk and the floor near the chair. In the process he leaves some faint fingerprints with the chalk dust.

He exits via the front door, which he leaves open and walks around to the garden window (which he broke from the inside). He leaves a footprint in the dirt outside the room, and again as he walks away. He picks up some glass fragments to throw in through the window. He then returns to his work and when asked gives a false statement.

Supporting evidence

The following clues point to Mr Hill.

- Some glass is found on the outside of the window - knocked from inside to make it look like a break-in.
- False witness statement - Mr Hill sees someone short but the shoe print is large. Students' anthropometry exercise demonstrates that there is a positive relationship between shoeprint size and height.
- The message is written quite high on the blackboard. This is too high for a student (unless they stood on a chair).
- The fingerprints don't match anyone in the class but they do match Mr Hill.
- The shoeprint outside the window is a large size and the impression matches Mr Hill's shoes.
- The direction of the shoeprints suggest that the person was looking in the window and then walked away from the window.
- The soil from the azalea plant when analysed for pH is acid. The soil from outside (pink hydrangea garden) is alkaline. The soil on the desk and the floor is acid indicating that it did NOT come from outside. It has been planted to make it look like it came from outside.
- The white powder on the desk is chalk dust. It could be a cleaning product or sherbet. Not conclusive.
- The writing on the board and note is the same. The handwriting analyses suggest that the students were NOT involved.
- The ink chromatography test suggests that the note was written with a texta the same brand that Mr Hill always uses.
- The event reconstruction means that the culprit entered the classroom via the door, i.e. needed a key. The dirt on the floor was not from outside and the glass outside indicated that the window was broken from inside.