

Career Opportunities in Forensic Sciences - Project

TV forensics teams have it good: There's a specialist for every possible field of study and a fancy piece of equipment for analyzing whatever evidence comes in. That may be the case in larger, more sophisticated jurisdictions, but in smaller cities and jurisdictions law enforcement officers or a single or very small number of criminalists perform all required duties.

Police typically are the first officials to arrive at any crime scene. After they determine the nature and exact location of the criminal act and secure the scene, they call various forensic specialists to document and gather evidence, and then transport it to the crime lab for further testing. Who shows up to handle these duties depends on the resources and structure of the jurisdiction.

Larger crime labs may have special crime-scene investigation unit (CSIU) that consists of individuals trained in evidence recognition, collection, and preservation. They are also skilled in performing many of the field tests and screening tests that must be done at a crime scene. Although their exact titles and duties vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, these specialists can be divided into two groups. ***Criminalists*** are those who deal with physical evidence and ***forensic investigators*** are those who deal with the body in cases of death.

Criminalist is a relatively new term and one that's not easy to define. It covers a wide range of abilities, responsibilities, and training. Some, such as serologists and chemists, are scientists while others, such as fingerprint and firearm examiners, are likely to be ex-police officers and have no true scientific training. Still others are technicians with on-the-job training.

No matter what their specialty or education, the bottom line is that criminalists work with evidence. That can mean a lot of things, from looking for poisons in blood samples to authenticating written documents, but all of it falls under the banner of criminalist.

In spite of what you see on TV and in the movies, criminalists aren't cops (although, in some cases, they are former police officers). They don't carry guns, interrogate suspects or witnesses, or make arrests. They don't treat the injured or deal with the dead body. They collect and analyze evidence. That's it.

–Forensics for Dummies, D.P. Lyle M.D.

Topic Choices:

- Crime-Scene Investigator/Examiner
- Crime laboratory analyst
- Latent Print examiner
- Firearms examiner/Ballistics expert
- Toolmark examiner
- Document examiner
- Trace Evidence examiner
- Forensic Pathologist/Medical examiner
- Forensic Anthropologist
- Forensic Odontologist
- Forensic Entomologist
- Forensic Psychiatrist/Psychologist
- Forensic Serologist
- Forensic Toxicologist
- Forensic Botanist
- Forensic Accountant
- Forensic Engineer
- Forensic biologist
- Forensic chemist

Your job is to create a powerpoint with a partner or by yourself that you will present to inform the class about the potential career paths available in the field of forensic science. The powerpoint should be at least 10 slides and should include the following information.

- Describe the career
- What education is needed to perform this job?
- How is this job related to solving a crime?
- Give a real-life example of how this person helped solve a crime scene – news article or website possibly?
- Show pictures that are examples of the type of evidence this person has collected or that relate to the specific job position
- Advantages/Disadvantages of career position – you will have to come up with this based on the research you have completed about the career.
- Employment opportunity – where can you get a job? Are there a lot of jobs available?
- Salary
- Related careers

Grades will summative and will be based on the following information:

- **10 points** – Design and layout of powerpoint, visually clear and appealing, contains pictures/graphics/video
- **15 points** – Presentation – all required information included, interesting information, public speaking
- **10 points** – Use of class time and focus & contribution to group (if applicable)