

# “A Body of Clues”

## Durham Sixth Form Centre

### National Curriculum subject content

6th Form (16 - 18 year olds).

BTEC Forensic Science

### Project Summary

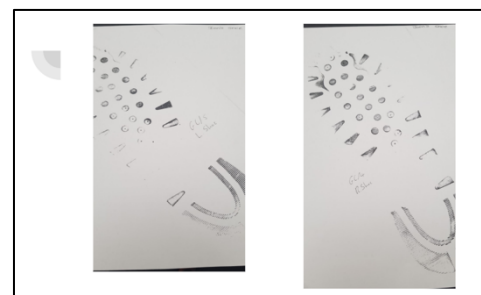
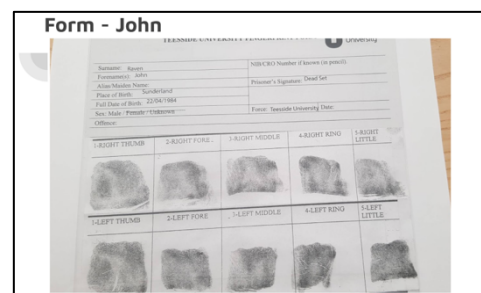
This is the final assignment for a Forensic Science Unit (Forensic Evidence, Collection and Analysis). In this project, students will experience and develop their knowledge and skills by taking part in a simulated crime scene investigation, from collecting the evidence, through the analysis and finally presenting their results in a variety of formats for use in the Criminal Justice System. As scientists, they will visit a courtroom and work with experts. As a result of this they will plan, write and produce a case file.

### Skill development

- Independent enquirers - researching forensic applications of analytical techniques.
- Team workers - working as a team to process a crime scene, adapting behaviour to suit different roles and situations.
- Effective participators - acting as an expert witness in role play activities and contributing to the successful processing of a crime scene.
- Self-managers - organising time and resources to complete processing of crime scene.

### Cultural capital

This project developed authentic scientific skills linked to the field of forensic science and criminal law. Students met ex-police officers from a real forensics team, dealt with real-world scenarios, and visited the law courts in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. As well as cultural and social links, the project developed research and literacy skills which would be needed in their future education and careers, such as creating expert witness statements; creating expert verbal reports; engaging in collaborative conversation; presenting ideas with evidence in the courtroom; and peer critique.



## Gatsby Benchmarks

BM4. Linking curriculum learning to careers  
 BM 5: Encounters with employers and employees  
 BM 6: Experience of workplaces  
 BM7: Encounters with further and higher education

A 34- year old man has been found unconscious in the driver's seat of a motor vehicle in a secluded area and there is a reason to believe he may have taken an overdose as there are empty tablet packets and a drinks bottle in the foot well.

Police enquiries reveal have identified the individual as **John Raven** of 12 Levia Close Middlesbrough.

Police attending his home address discovered the premises locked and had to force the door to gain entry. Upon entering the property they found an apparent suicide note on the dining table.

## Project activity and timescale

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
Entry Event:  Visit to Newcastle Law Courts	What do we already know from this unit?  SOCO, Chemical Analysis, Physical Analysis and Biological Analysis.  <u>Scenario</u>	Deconstruct their own role.  Each role has been designed by the teacher - students chose which role they would prefer.  What are the features of a good script? What is your role in the case?	Guest speaker - Teesside University (Forensic Science Expert).  British Science Week  Forensic investigator to lead the discussion	The courtroom  Questions depend on their own role.	Completed case file.  What are the key features of a case file?	Class noticeboard, class via Google Slide presentation.  Does this public product meet the criteria?  Next steps - how could we extend this investigation further?

## Launch event/ Final product and showcase

Launch event: Visit to Newcastle Law Courts. Students observed a variety of cases taking place by sitting in the public viewing gallery. They completed a workbook and debriefed the visit on their return to the lab. They then had a second launch event with a visit from a forensic investigator who launched the "crime" that they would be "solving". This led onto the analysis of the crime scene that they had examined earlier (due to timings of the course, this element was done in a previous week).

Showcase: Individual product – Students produced their own case file which contained an awareness that case files are built up over time and cases can remain open. They shared these with the class. The team product was displayed on the classroom noticeboard.

## Project feedback

"I enjoyed the trip to the crown court significantly, as it aligned well with my career ambitions. It offered valuable insight that is difficult to get elsewhere."

"Given the course, it is clear that many people taking the subject have ambitions of joining the forensic field of work, or close enough to it. For this reason, participation and engagement for this project was strong, as many people valued insight into their potential futures. This increased engagement heightened the quality of work."

"It allowed us to put into perspective what working in this environment is really like and from seeing how courts worked first hand we were able to develop work a lot better as we had a full idea of what we were talking about."

## Learning for next time

Students enjoyed the interactive, authentic aspect of the project, particularly the visit to the law courts and simulating a courtroom in the lab:

“I enjoyed all of the projects as I find forensic science to be very fascinating and something I want to do as a future career.”

“I enjoyed the mock trial as it allowed for us to ask our own questions about the offence and for us to apply our own information made up on the spot to potentially throw the overall verdict from the jury.”

“In my opinion, the part of this project I liked the most was when we set up our own law court in the classroom and each of us had different parts and this is because it was so exciting to hear what each of us had to say and what the outcome of the crime would be, it really helps when there are exciting things like that in the course as it encourages us to get the work done and there is something to look forward to at the end of the unit.”

There were elements which they felt could be improved next time:

“[I didn't enjoy] The spontaneity of the mock court proceedings. Ideally, the proceedings would have been scheduled and planned beforehand, so that the trial itself can run more smoothly. (akin to a real court hearing). In some regards, this made delivering information difficult.”

“The thing I enjoyed the least about the project was having to write an outcome of all of the evidence and repeating it in each assignment when I could of just don't it all on the last assignment, other than that I did not have any problems with the project.”

The BTEC teacher acknowledged that not all students were on board with this approach to working or struggled with the amount of groupwork, but that they all completed the work before deadline and that it sparked their enthusiasm for the field – and her own:

“Some learners did struggle with it. Some of them don't want to stand up in front of the class. That's fine. So I coped with them. They did eventually but naturally you get all the different personalities in a class, some of them bought into it straight away, some of them love that stuff... but every teacher finds that difficult in every class.”

“I got them working really quickly, they wanted to do it. They handed it in before the deadline and it was all really good so there you go.”

“I've learned that it's improved high grades so that's good. It did work because of the feedback from the student voice and my students would be completely honest with you.”

“It's actually sparked my enthusiasm which is lovely and it definitely requires time. You've got to reflect on it.”

## Useful links/resources/ideas

To visit the Law Courts in Newcastle, check <https://www.thelawpages.com/court-hearings-lists/Newcastle-Crown-Court.php> or contact 0191 201 2000.

If your school isn't near Newcastle, find your local university/college outreach teams.

Resources relating to this specific project on our website.

General resources on our website: blank planning tools, links to useful websites, more case studies.