

Forensics Summer Assignment & Course Outline

To introduce you to the beginning topics of forensic science, I am giving you two options for your summer reading assignment.

Option 1: Read the book, "The Bone Collector" by Jeffrey Deaver and be prepared to discuss all of the basic forensics (see list below) that are explained in the book.

I AM NOT REQUIRING YOU TO GO BUY A BOOK!!! Check it out from the library or your digital reading device, somewhere. I have 6 copies people can borrow. You can buy it if you want (I own all of Jeffrey Deaver's books, he is one of my favorite authors,) but you do not have to.

I must give a warning: there is an excessive amount of swearing in "Bone Collector" and some violence. It is enough that when they turned it into a movie it is rated-R because of all the swearing (they don't show much of the violence.)

If you do not feel comfortable with the amount of swearing in the book, then read through the sections listed below from our textbook. The reason I am still giving the book as an option is that it does the best job of explaining the basics of scene safety, scene reconstruction, evidence gathering/packaging, and how to work a crime-scene of any book I have ever read (including textbooks.)

Feel free to take notes on the basics of the forensics explained in the book. Keep any handwritten notes with you. You can use it on a later assignment.

Option 2: Read the sections in your textbook (see list below) and do a short assignment for each topic.

The choice is yours (or you can do both, whatever works for you,) though

You will have to read your text anyway, **as we will have reading quizzes from the sections of our textbook as we go along the chapters anyway.**

Here are the topics we start the year with:

- Securing the crime scene
- Documenting the scene
 - Observation skills
 - Sketching skills
 - Walking the grid
- Searching for evidence
- Collection/preservation/packing of evidence
- Chain of custody
- Types of physical evidence

All of these topics are discussed/explained throughout the course of "The Bone Collector."

If you choose to use the textbook instead, it is pages 3-51 (chapters 1 and 2.)

Assignments for most of the first few topics covered:

Securing the crime scene – write a list of the basic steps to securing a scene

Documenting the scene – write a list of the techniques to documenting a scene

- Write a short description of each and why it might be used over another technique

Walking the grid – draw each of the major techniques used to search a crime scene

- Include a pros/cons to each style of grid search
- Decide which you would likely use if you were a CSI

Sketching skills – draw an imagined crime scene using a rough sketch

- Then draw out a final sketch – you do NOT have to use a CAD program – just use a ruler and make it pretty

Collection/preservation/packing of evidence – write a list of each main type of evidence and how it should be packaged (plastic or paper bag, or either is accepted,) and any special considerations needed (especially for blood)

Define Chain-of-custody and the 4th Amendment – briefly describe how each pertains to our study of forensics

Just write this out on a sheet of paper. Nothing fancy is needed...do what makes the most sense to you and I am happy with it. Bring it with you when school starts again in the fall.

You can use anything you hand-wrote on a later assignment.

Summer Contact and Other Information

We will cover each of these topics listed on the 1st page of this packet at the start of the year (via notes and activities,) but having this prior knowledge will allow us to move into the topics that require much more depth a bit quicker.

Everything we do will be available on Schoology. In fact, I won't print very many pieces of paper for you at all this year. You will be doing all of your reading quizzes and tests on Schoology. Class notes and labs will be posted on Schoology as well for your use at any time.

If you have questions over the summer assignment, email my school account: nfriedman@brownsburg.k12.in.us

I much prefer emails to Schoology messages. If you email me, please use your school email account, ***NOT*** your personal email. You have a school email account, please use it when doing things for school.

Everything we do, that I have a digital copy of, will be uploaded online.

Class Breakdown

My class breaks down like this:

We will do in-class notes as needed, generally to start a unit and go through all the basic information. Notes are uploaded to Schoology ahead of time.

Semester 1

2 Projects – sketching crime scene and final exam poster

5 Exams – Unit 1; Unit 2; Unit 3 – part 1, Unit 3-part 2, Unit 3 – part 3

4 Writing assignments – hair, fingerprints, handwriting, blood spatter/typing

Some will be short essays, some will be educational pamphlets

10-15 Reading quizzes – each one about 7-10 pages in the textbook; you may use *handwritten* notes on every reading quiz if you wish

5-7 either lab quizzes (pulled straight from your lab notebook) or topic quizzes

These are the only things that are graded for the entire semester. It works out to be approximately 300-400 points for the entire semester.

Semester 2

4 projects – alcohol chemistry, arson chemistry, CSI evaluations, design a crime

4 Exams – Unit 4 – part 1, Unit 4- part 2, Unit 4 – part 3 (largest); Unit 5 (shortest)

2 Writing assignments – research paper in Q3; in-class writing Q4

10-15 reading quizzes - each one about 7-10 pages in the textbook; you may use *handwritten* notes on every reading quiz if you wish

Around 5 either lab quizzes (pulled straight from your lab notebook) or topic quizzes

Plus the S2 final exam is a 3 week group project that encompasses one of everything we do all year.

This works out to be around 300-400 points for the entire semester.

Aside from the writing/research assignments and section readings, most of our work will be in-class. This is a hands-on, activity based advanced science course. You are expected to keep data from lab, answer lab questions, etc. *Please be prepared to work on your own, with partners, in groups, etc. and to be self-reliant/self-sufficient. I am treating this as if it were an introductory college course since our text book is written that way. It is an upper-level science course. I will run it that way. YOU WILL*

NEED A NOTEBOOK FOR LABS!

We will review things that you need from chemistry and physics as we get to them, but it will be just that, a review. I expect you already know basic chemistry topics including naming of ionic/covalent compounds, groups of the periodic table, behaviors of atoms, etc. You will receive a chemistry review in December that will be due on the 1st day of 2nd semester to get you ready for our chemistry intensive drug chemistry unit.

We will also have quite a few guest speakers. I try to get a professional for each major topic we cover. I had 10 guest speakers last school year spread out throughout the year.

Final Thoughts

A common misconception is that all we will do is watch CSI in class. It is my hope that the class breakdown shows you what is expected and what we will be doing. This is a lab-science class. You will be doing labs, taking data, making graphs, interpreting graphs, writing essays,

designing posters, etc. Everything you have done in your other classes, but now framed in terms of how science and the court system work together. We do watch CSI...once in class...near the end of semester 2. And you do a project detailing all the mistakes they made in the episode. In fact, most of our time is spent throughout the year talking about how bad the science is in most TV shows and how those shows have both increased awareness of forensics (called the CSI effect) and made the lives of forensic scientists much more difficult (because they are so incorrect most of the time.)

This is a full-year course. If you want a 1 semester only science credit, see if the office will switch you into either Astronomy or Oceanography. They are each only 1 semester. Please do not go into this class thinking you can leave at semester... You signed up for a full-year science course, you will be in here for a full-year course.

If you have any questions about the information in this packet, please let me know. My room is B2-318. Near the locker-bay area upstairs and backs up to the science lab.

Email me anytime: nfriedman@brownsburg.k12.in.us

Please don't send me Schoology messages. I send them to you, when needed, but my school email pops up on my phone, while Schoology messages don't. **EMAIL ME!**

Thanks for taking the time to read through this and for signing up for class! It is not your regular science class, that is for sure...

--Friedman