DETECTIVE NOTES
Case File: 03

Essential Investigator Skills Part 1

Key Questions:
- What skills do you need to be a police officer or forensic investigator?
- How do these skills help police officers and investigators solve crimes?

Desired Outcomes:
- Students will be able to demonstrate their understanding of objectivity, bias, and inference through the activities.

Activities and Timelines (30 minutes)

Introduction	
Word Scramble	

Main Activities	10 minutes
What is Bias?	5 minutes
Show, Don't Tell Activity	5 minutes

Conclusion	15 minutes
Discussion	

Resources
- Resource 3-1: The Bus Activity
- Resource 3-2: "For the Birds" Video

Introduction   5 minutes

- **Write following scrambled words on white board:**
  - ▷ opcile (police)
  - ▷ mrice (crime)
  - ▷ tssspuec (suspects)
  - ▷ tnwisse (witness)
  - ▷ iasb (bias)
  - ▷ evtcjboei (objective)
  - ▷ ecnerefni (inference)
- **Say:** I will give you five minutes to try and unscramble as many of these words as you can.

Teacher's note: Students may have a difficult time unscrambling the last three words. Completing them as a class can act as a good introduction into the topic of this lesson.

Discussion: Essential Skills   5 minutes

- **Explain:** As we learned in the last lesson, observation and awareness are important skills for a witness to have. They are also important for police officers. Before a recruit can become an officer, their attention, awareness, and observation skills are tested. Some of the ways police officers use observation are to:
    - ▷ Notice suspicious persons
    - ▷ Prevent crimes
    - ▷ Control emergencies
    - ▷ Secure evidence
- **Ask & Brainstorm:**
    - ▷ What are some other skills that are important for police officers and forensic investigators to have?
    - ▷ What are characteristics that would not make you a good police officer or forensic investigator?
- **Say:** There are three important skills that police officers and forensic investigators need to have:
    - ▷ Write on board:
        - Being observant
        - Remaining objective
        - Using inference
- **Ask:** We have already talked about being observant, but what does it mean to remain objective?
    - ▷ Answer: Looking at something objectively means not being influenced by personal feelings or opinions. It involves letting the evidence and facts speak for themselves.
- **Explain:** If we let our opinions get in the way of facts, we are showing bias.

The Bus Activity   5 minutes

- **Materials:**
    - ▷ Resource 3-1
- **Teacher Prep:**
    - ▷ Open Resource 3-1

- **Open** Resource 3-1: The Bus Activity
- **Ask:** What direction is the bus travelling?

- **Ask:** Do you know the answer? The only possible answers are "left" or "right". Still not sure?
- **Explain and discuss:**
    - ▷ When people are shown this brain teaser they often answer "left". Why? Because you can't see the door. This works in countries, like Canada, where we drive on the right side of the road.
    - ▷ In the UK and some countries in Asia, where they drive on the left side of the road, people often answer "right".
    - ▷ This brain teaser demonstrates bias! Our answer is influenced by being used to seeing cars driving on the right side of the road. The fact is, the bus could be travelling in any direction.

Discussion   5 minutes

- **Ask and discuss:** What is inferring?
  - ▷ **Answer:** When we infer, we are using observations and information that is given to us (like evidence), **plus** information that we already know, to make a theory or draw a conclusion that makes sense. What I observe, added to what I already know, equals an inference!
  - ▷ Inferring something is like reading between the lines. In an investigation, evidence plays a huge role in making theories or inferring what happened. The stronger the evidence, the more valid an inference!
- **Explain:** If we went outside and observed the ground was wet and someone was walking by with an umbrella, what could we infer? We observe the ground is wet and we infer that it was raining.
  - ▷ "Because _____ I can infer _____" (Because the cars and street are wet, I can infer that it rained)
- **Invite** students to practice making inferences using inference sentences with a classmate who sits near them. Some students may like to share their inference sentences with the whole class

Exit Pass: Making Inferences   10 minutes
- **Materials:**
  - ▷ Resource 3-2: Making Inferences
  - ▷ Paper and pencil for each student

- **Open:** Resource 3-2: Making Inferences
- **Say:** We are going to watch a quick video. As you are watching, I would like you to write down three inferences you have made. These inferences could be how a character is feeling, what the lesson of the video is, or why a character is feeling a certain way.
- **Give examples:**
  - ▷ I can tell (character) is feeling _____ because _____.
  - ▷ How (character) acts tells me _____.
  - ▷ I think that (character) is feeling _____ because _____.
  - ▷ I think the lesson is _____ because _____.

Teacher's note: When students are finished, they can hand their paper in to you as an exit pass.

Curriculum Links

Science and Investigation

General Learner Expectations:

- 6-8: Apply observation and inference skills to recognize and interpret patterns and to distinguish a specific pattern from a group of similar patterns.

Specific Learner Expectations:

- SLE 3: Recognize that evidence found at the scene of an activity may have unique characteristics that allow an investigator to make inferences about the participants and the nature of the activity, and give examples of how specific evidence may be used.