

The Law-Related Education Academy is sponsored by the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education with funding made possible by the Arizona Department of Education.

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**“CSI: Cracking the Case with Forensic Science” Academy**  
(Middle/High School)

**Thinking Like an Investigator Lesson Plan**

*Please obtain administrator approval prior to implementing this lesson.*

**Objectives: Students will...**

- analyze pieces of evidence.
- generate investigative questions.
- evaluate what makes a strong question when solving a case.

**Protective Factor Developed:** Critical Reasoning Skills

**Materials:**

- ✓ Emily’s email (1 per student)
- ✓ Whiteboard and markers
- ✓ Chart paper and markers (1 per group)
- ✓ Evidence photos (1 per group):

**Timeframe:** 40 Minutes

**Team Teaching:** For effective implementation of Law Related Education (LRE), team teach with the classroom teacher by...

- Having both the officer and teacher rotate among students and to different groups. Both instructors will provide positive feedback and engage in friendly conversations with students. This procedure will help reduce classroom disruptions, increase student engagement, and build supportive relationships with students.
- Encouraging classroom teachers to participate in all activities by injecting clarification statements by relating relevant content to their curriculum. In this method, students will see more connections to their student life and be willing to carry over concepts and skills learned in LRE.
- Assigning the classroom teacher part of the lesson instructions. Team teaching with the classroom teacher enables the students to further see the importance of LRE lessons. It also provides an opportunity for the classroom teacher to demonstrate teaching skills conducive to effective teaching. Student attention can be maintained more easily with different voices and personalities experienced throughout the lesson.

**Lesson**

1. Divide the class into small groups (3-4 students each) and distribute **chart paper** and **markers** to each group.
2. Distribute a copy of **Emily's email** to each student and allow time for them to read it. Explain that the recipient of the email, Emily, is now missing.
3. Have students work with their groups to brainstorm five things they would like to explore further based on this piece of evidence and write their ideas down on chart paper. *Possible ideas: interview Emily or John, request email communication between Emily and Laura or Emily and John, retrieve text messages or social media messages from Emily, Laura, and John.*
4. Call on a volunteer from each group to share 1-2 ideas and record responses on the **whiteboard**.
5. Explain that, for this activity, the evidence has already been collected and processed. Tell students they are detectives deciding what to do next.
6. Provide each group with a different **evidence photo**: a shoe print, wristwatch, cell phone with blood droplets, sticky note with writing, or Instagram post.
7. Have each group discuss their piece of evidence and determine what next steps or questions they have that would help them solve the crime. They should write their ideas down on chart paper. *Possible answers: Who did this belong to? When and where was it used? Why is it here? How was it handled? Could it reveal anything about a person or event? Are there other warrants or pieces of evidence that could be requested based on this evidence?*
8. Have each group share their evidence and questions with the class.
9. Emphasize that when detectives analyze evidence, it's not just about what's in front of them — it's also about what might come next. Thinking ahead helps them decide what to investigate, who to talk to, or what evidence to collect next.
10. Debrief by leading a whole group discussion on the following questions:
  - a. What made some questions stronger or more useful than others?
  - b. Why is it important to ask good questions when analyzing evidence?Facilitator note: if students are unresponsive, have them discuss possible answers in their small groups first, then call on each group to share one answer.

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**Arizona State Standards Correlations**

**Social Studies**

- 7.SP3.1 Create compelling questions and supporting questions that reflect enduring issues about the world, past and present.
- 8.SP3.1 Create and answer compelling and supporting questions that reflect enduring issues in the field of history and social science.
- 8.SP3.8 Present arguments and explanations on topics of interest to others to reach multiple audiences in and outside of the classroom print, oral, and digital technologies.
- HS.SP3.8 Present arguments and explanations that feature ideas and perspectives on issues and topics to reach a range of audiences and venues using print, oral, and digital technologies.

**English Language Arts**

- 7.SL.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- 7.SL.4 Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, appropriate vocabulary, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
- 8.SL.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- 8.SL.4 Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
- 9-10.RI.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- 9-10.SL.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- 9-10.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence in an organized, developed style appropriate to purpose, audience, and task, allowing listeners to follow the speaker’s line of reasoning, message, and any alternative perspectives.
- 11-12.RI.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

11-12.SL.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

11-12.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence in an organized, developed style appropriate to purpose, audience, and task, allowing listeners to follow the speaker's line of reasoning, message, and any alternative perspectives.