

Detective Nate

By Josephine Ann A. Aparte

Lady the Beagle was excited. Today, her human mom promised to give her ice cream for dessert. She ran around the house in excitement.

“Lady, stop running! Your paw prints are all over the place!” exclaimed Lola.

Nathan heard his grandmother and quickly came to Lady’s rescue. “That’s okay, Lola. I need those paw prints anyway.”

Lola knitted her brows. “What for, Nathan?”

“I want to know if I can use Lady’s paw prints to detect a crime,” replied Nathan.

“Oh,” Lola said, smiling now, “like how detectives used fingerprints to find a criminal?”

Nathan nodded. “Teacher Joan said we all have unique fingerprints. Your fingerprint is different from mine. That is why detectives can tell the person who did a crime by checking the fingerprints he left in the crime scene.”

“Okay, Detective Nathan,” said Lola, “tell me how they do it.” She motioned for Nathan to sit beside her on the sofa.

“Sure, Lola,” said Nathan as he sat beside Lola. “Detectives dust off fingerprints with fine, colored powder. The powder sticks to the fingerprint.



And when the excess powder is blown off, a clear impression of the fingerprint is left. The print can then be photographed and lifted with tape. Some police officers even use high-powered lasers to examine surfaces in the dark. ”

“That’s it?” asked Lola.

“Nope,” replied Nathan. “The picture is run on the computer to find the match of the fingerprint with those fingerprints in the police record.”

“That’s interesting,” said Lola.


“Yup,” said Nathan. “And you know what? Fingerprints are also used like an identification card!”

“Really?” asked Lola.

Nathan made a thumbs-up sign. “I can use this thumb to access a computer or information, or enter a building. Cool, isn’t it?”

“Well, I think you’ve already shared with me enough of what you know. But, really, why do you want to check Lady’s paw prints?”

Nathan shrugged his shoulders. “I just wanted to know who left that big mound of poop in the garden ...”

Lola slapped her forehead. “Goodness! That’s a bigger mess than paw prints!” 

Fingerprint Facts

Look closely at your fingertips. Can you see a pattern of fine lines? Those lines are called dermal ridges. When your fingers touch an object, the sweat, oil, dirt, or other substances on the fingers leave an impression (a fingerprint) on the object, in the same way that a rubber stamp leaves ink marks on paper.

Sources

Emily Sohn, Fingerprint Evidence. www.sciencenewsforkids.org/articles/20060503/Feature1.asp

Juan Vucetich and the origins of forensic fingerprinting. www.nlm.nih.gov/visibleproofs/galleries/cases/vucetich.html

From fingerprints to DNA. www.abc.net.au/science/slab/forensic/default.htm

What's the Word?

Each fingerprint in the box of fingerprints bears a letter. The letters, when put together, will form a word. But some of the letters are not needed, so cross them out.

Answer the questions first. The letters in the boxes can be found in the fingerprints.

After you have crossed out the letters that are not needed, gather the letters together. Unscramble them to form the mystery word.

1. D rmal rid es are the fine lines at the fingertips.
2. When you touch an object, your fingers leave an mpres o on the object.
3. Fingerprints can be also used like an ide i ication card.
4. Detectives use high-powered lase to examine surfaces in the dark.
5. To detect fingerprints, detectives use colored owde to dust off fingerprints.



MYSTERY WORD

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Search for the Different Fingerprints

Do you want to be like Detective Nate? Then get your magnifying lens and start the search for the two fingerprints that are the same.



Answer Key

What's the Word?

1. E, G
2. I, I, N
3. N, T, F
4. R, S
5. P, R

Mystery Word

Fingerprints

Search for the Different Fingerprints

