

Detective Badge

Purpose: Know how to follow clues and discover facts like a real detective.

Step 1: Practice the power of observation

One of the most important skills detectives use when working on a case is the ability to watch people and situations very closely. This is called observation. Practice your observation skills by asking someone in your home or on a video call to put 7–10 small objects on a tray or table while you close your eyes. Then, take 20 seconds to look and try to remember all the objects. Close your eyes again, ask them to remove one or two items, then open your eyes. Can you name what is missing? Are you surprised by the outcome? What did you learn about yourself?

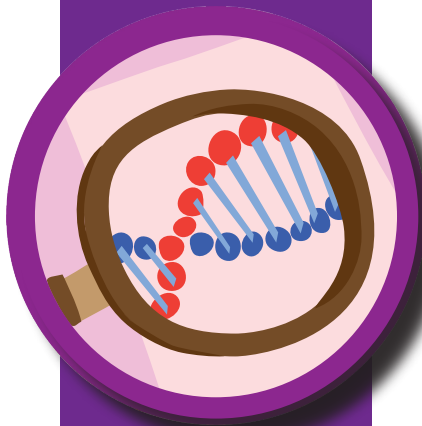
Step 2: Communicate in code

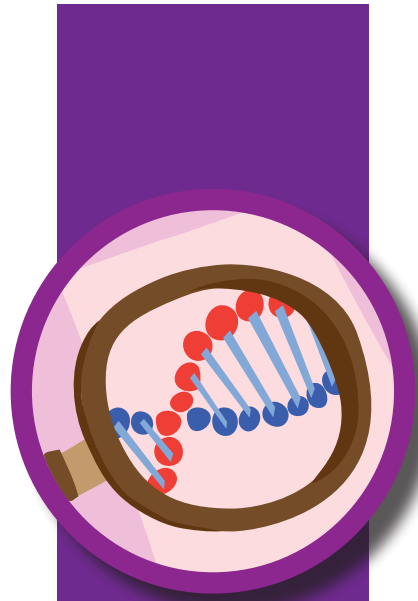
You may know about computer coding, but do you know about Morse Code? Sometimes, detectives, spies, or special agents can't talk to one another because of distance or privacy. They have to use other ways to get messages to each other. Research Morse Code and check out some examples. Then invent your own code! You will need 26 figures to represent each letter of the alphabet. The code can be a mix of numbers, shapes, and punctuation marks. Write a message in your unique code and give it to a family member or friend with a copy of the code to see if they can uncover your message!

Step 3: Fingerprint for fun

No set of fingerprints is the same—not even with identical twins. This is why fingerprints are used to find people who commit crimes, and they can be used to find a missing person. Ask someone in your home to join you in this activity. If you have an inkpad, roll your finger on it, from one side to the other. Put your finger on a piece of paper so you can see your fingerprint. Alternatively, you can take a pencil and scribble on a large area of paper. Take your finger and push it down on the scribbled area. Cover your finger with a piece of clear tape, peel off the tape, and then stick it on a blank area of the paper so you can see your fingerprint. Look closely at both sets of fingerprints to see the differences.

Girl Scout Juniors





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Step 4: Try out detective science

Detectives use cutting-edge science to figure out what happened, who did it, and sometimes the reason it happened. Learn how to detect details in something as simple as handwriting! Choose a sentence out of a book or magazine, then write it in your regular handwriting. Now, write it again—but with your other hand! Finally, write it a third time, intentionally trying to disguise your regular handwriting by changing how you form the letters. Can you find any similarities between your regular handwriting and one of the times you disguised your handwriting? Finding details like these can help detectives solve forgeries.

Step 5: Follow the clues to solve a real mystery

Now that there's evidence you could make a great detective, put your skills into action. Find clues "on the scene." When a detective arrives at a scene, they look for clues about what happened and about people who were there. Choose a room and be the detective. Search the "scene" and label the "clues" you see. For instance, a chair turned away from a desk could mean someone left in a hurry. Pictures of people in frames could tell you who is important to someone's life. Trade ideas with someone in your home about what you think the clues could mean.

Congratulations! You've earned the Detective badge!

