

# Look And Record



## Topic

Scene of crime procedures

## Introduction

Using the correct procedures when investigating a crime assists the process of solving the crime. When the police patrol arrives at the scene of a serious crime, the officers secure the area to prevent any unauthorized access that might contaminate evidence. The crime scene is then scrutinized carefully, close attention being paid to the means of access to the area, the identification and positioning of all the objects present, conditions such as lighting, and weather (if outside). These observations are all recorded on a sketch. This sketch is used to make a scale drawing that identifies all the items found and shows exactly where they were found. Investigators can use such a drawing when interviewing witnesses to clarify their evidence. In this experiment, you will “secure” a crime scene and, taking precautions against contamination of evidence, make a sketch of the items found there. You will then convert your sketch into a scale drawing. This experiment could either be completed in class, where an area of the classroom could be identified as the “crime scene,” or as an exercise at home where you could use your bedroom as the “crime scene.” Before carrying out the experiment, you need to set the scene. Imagine a crime has been committed in the chosen area. In the example in this experiment, it is suggested that an intruder has thrown a brick through the window – leaving the brick lying on the floor and the mark of a footprint on the carpet.

## Time required

1 hour

## Materials

area chosen as the “crime scene,” e.g., an area in the classroom or at home (the example shown in the diagrams in this experiment is based on a bedroom)  
tape or string to secure the “crime scene”  
paper and pencils  
graph paper  
tape measure  
compass  
calculator  
thin latex gloves (optional)

## Safety note

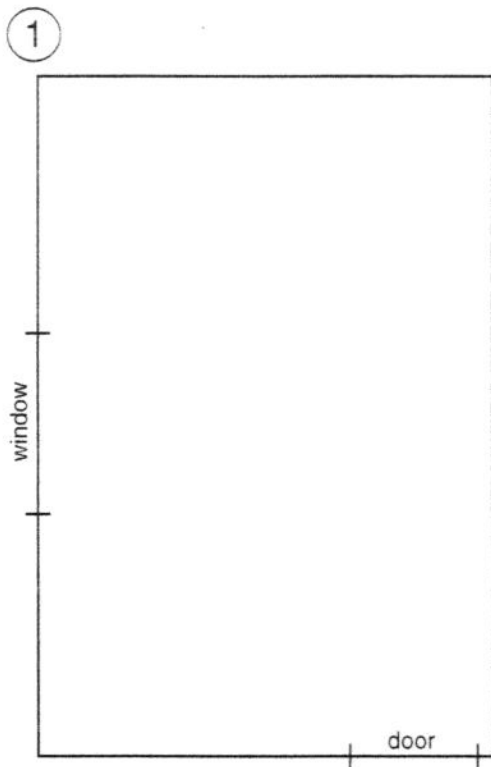


Please read the general safety precautions at the beginning of the book.

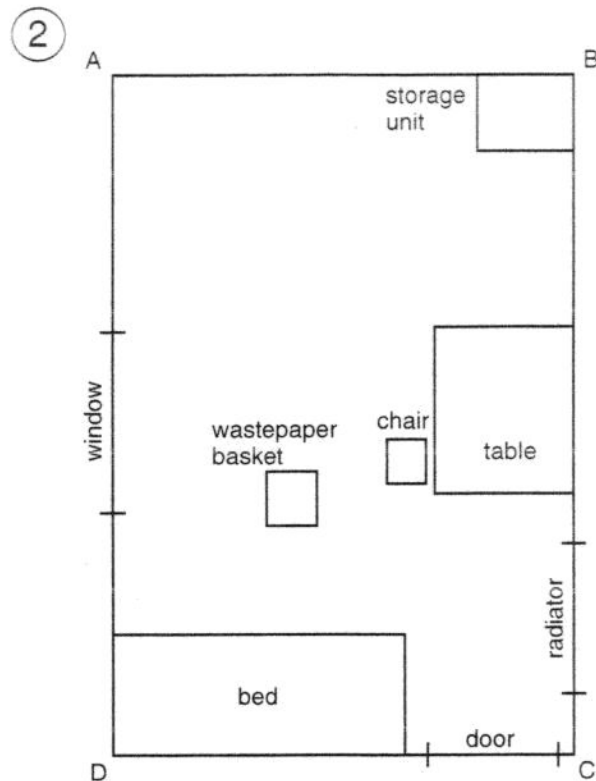
## Procedure

First consider how you are going to work within the “crime scene” to avoid contaminating any evidence. You may want to cover your shoes with paper covers, but it should be sufficient to just remove your shoes. Similarly, you may want to use thin latex gloves when touching objects in the “crime scene.”

1. Identify the area to be used as the “crime scene” and secure it. If at school, place a chair at each corner of the area to be used, and attach string or tape between the chairs to form a barrier. If at home, place tape across the door of the room to be used.
2. Using a blank sheet of paper, make a rough sketch of the area (see the example in diagram 1 below) indicating the positions of doors and windows, or any other possible area through which a “criminal” could have gained access to the “crime scene.”

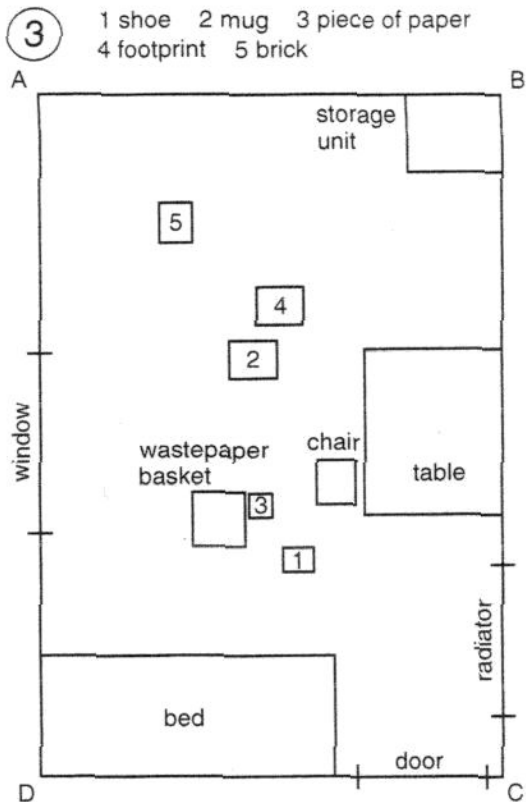


*Sketch of the area under investigation*

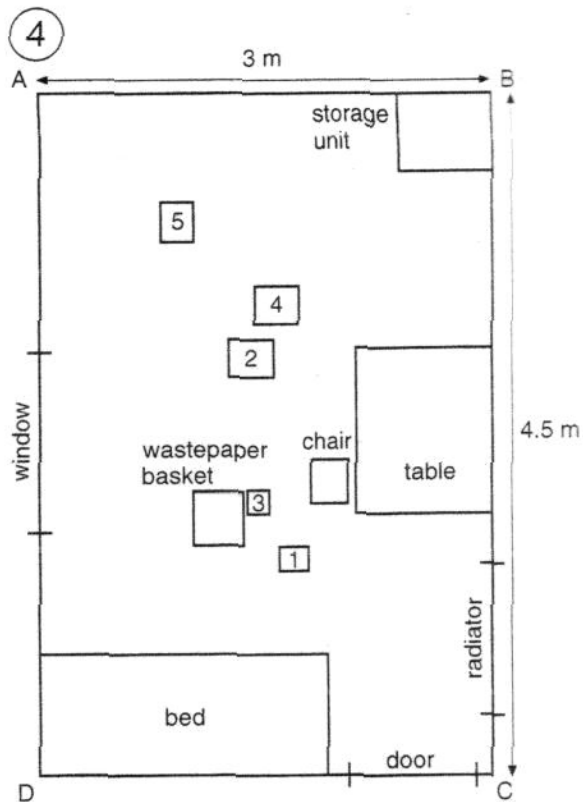


*Sketch showing position of any large items at the “crime scene”*

3. On your sketch, outline and name the positions taken by any large items of furniture and label the corners of the “crime scene” A, B, C, D (see the example in diagram 2 above).
4. Look again at the “crime scene” for small items in the area, e.g., a shoe, an empty coffee mug, a brick, a screwdriver lying on the floor, a wet footprint, a dirty sock on the bed, an overturned glass on the table, etc. Remember at this stage in the investigation you do not know what might be relevant to the investigation, so aim to record as much as possible. Indicate the positions of these items on your sketch and label them (see the example in diagram 3 on the next page).



Sketch indicating position of small items at the "crime scene"

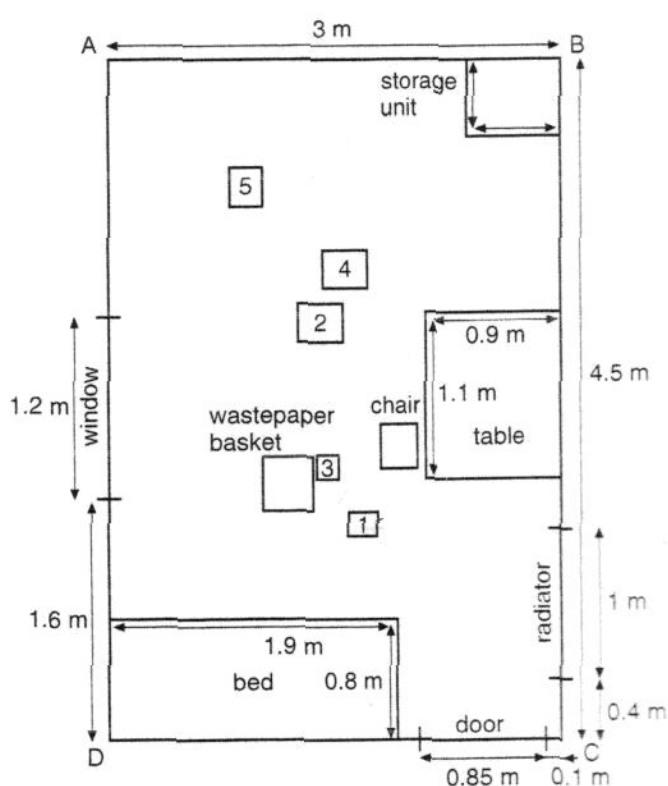


Sketch showing the dimensions of the "crime scene"

5. Using the precautions outlined above, enter the "crime scene."

Using a tape measure, take the dimensions of the "crime scene" and write these on the appropriate line of your sketch (see the example in diagram 4 above).

6. Measure and record the sizes and positions of the doors, windows, and large pieces of furniture (see the example in diagram 5 opposite).



Sketch recording the positions of the large items at the "crime scene"