

Individual or Class Evidence

{ Trace Evidence

Class Evidence

- Any characteristics that are common to a group are called class characteristics.
- Type of fiber is a class characteristic. Since there are many thousands of yards of polyester made, even in specific shapes and colors, this is a class characteristic—all polyester fiber has the same chemical characteristics. Hair is another class characteristic. All brown human hair has the same class characteristics, under a microscope. Their medullas are fragmented or absent and the color and scale pattern of the hair found on any individual varies over their entire scalp.

Individual Evidence

◦ Individual characteristics are those that are unique to a single person or a specific item that only one person can possess. For instance, the brown human hair that was a class characteristic on it has a root on can give the DNA of a specific person. DNA is an individual characteristic. Fingerprints are an individual characteristic. Since fingerprints are a random growth pattern on an individual's skin, and they do not change over time, no two people have identical fingerprints. Footwear that has been worn for a few days has individual characteristics.

Evidence Walk-about

◦How is it determined whether a characteristic is class or individual? The investigator must determine how much of that substance or object were produced and how much of it may be found still in existence. The probability of finding another sample exactly like the one in question can then be calculated. That probability is used to determine whether or not that questioned evidence has individual or class characteristics.

Directions

- There are 20 lab stations around the room. At each station, you must decide and EXPLAIN if the evidence is individual or class evidence.
- You need to create a data table to organize your information.
- You need to answer the questions on a separate sheet of paper using complete sentences.

Data table

◦ Description of evidence

Class or Individual

How do you know?