Science Plan

Find your fingerprints



Human fingerprints are detailed, nearly unique, difficult to alter, and durable over the life of an individual, making them suitable as long-term markers of human identity.

Equipment

Playdough (optional)
Paper
Charcoal pieces
Sellotape

Method

1) Allow children to explore the patterns on their fingertips! Can use playdough and push their fingers into it.
2) Or colour in a patch on a piece of paper with a piece of charcoal.
3) Press their finger down onto the charcoal so it covers their fingertips.
4) Get a friend to place a strip of sellotape onto their fingertip and push down so the charcoal fingerprint is transferred.
5) Stick down onto the piece of paper and label which finger it belongs to.
6) Repeat with all fingers! Are they all the same or are they different?

A fingerprint is an impression left by the friction ridges of a human finger. The recovery of partial fingerprints from a crime scene is an important method of forensic science. Moisture and grease on a finger result in fingerprints on surfaces such as glass or metal. Deliberate impressions of entire fingerprints can be obtained by ink or other substances transferred from the peaks of friction ridges on the skin to a smooth surface such as paper. Fingerprint records normally contain impressions from the pad on the last joint of fingers and thumbs, though fingerprint cards also typically record portions of lower joint areas of the fingers.