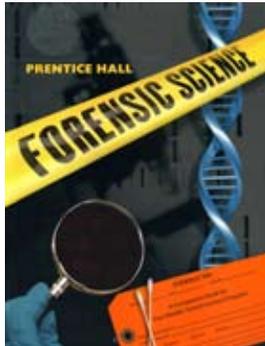


Book Reviews

***Forensic Science* by Clarence Cocroft. Pearson (2009). ISBN-13: 978-0-13-362746-6.**



Once upon a time foreign languages were taught only in high school. Then, many, many years ago, the lessons moved to junior high school, now called middle school. And for many years now foreign languages have been taught at increasingly younger and younger grades all the way down to elementary school. So goes forensics.

Forensics was once the realm of law enforcement, or of college students preparing for a career there. Now it is taught in thousands of high schools, and a large number of middle schools. Publishers are waking up to the fact that everyone likes to solve puzzles, especially if they're like the ones on the cool crime shows on television. And Pearson is one of the first to make a commitment to that audience.

Forensic Science by Clarence Cocroft is not a large, heavy book like many other forensic texts, but then again large, heavy arms won't be carrying it. It is meant for a younger audience. However, this doesn't mean the content is watered or dumbed down. On the contrary--each of the four chapters contains everything needed to not only engage the reader, but to lay a very solid foundation for further study in the subject.

Pearson has taken pains to place colorful graphics and photographs on every page. The writing is straightforward, and color, bolding, bullets, and highlighting help to draw the reader's eye to important words and concepts.

Although there are only four chapters (Crime Scene Investigation, Prints and Trace Evidence, Identifying an Individual, and Bringing Evidence to Court), each is covered in engaging detail. Every one includes a chapter project to be done with others, a Discovery activity to find out the answers to common forensic questions related to that chapter, a skills activity that challenges students to think like

scientists, a skills lab where they measure or analyze something, at home activities, and math exercises directly related to their investigations. There are also passages for the students to read, and vocabulary at the beginning of each chapter.

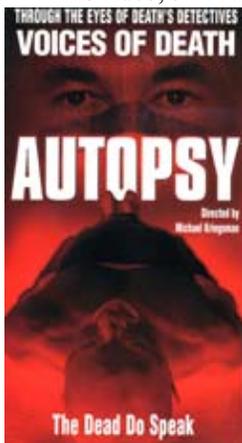
Forensic Science is not part of the middle school science curriculum in any state, but this book does provide a middle school teacher with the background and activities to spice up a science class for kids who are familiar with the ways of the street, at least on television. Many of the activities can be tied to national science standards, and the units in *Forensic Science* can definitely be used as a motivating reward during the school year. If a teacher has a bent toward inquiry, this subject lends itself beautifully to learning because forensics is not only the acquisition of material relevant to real life puzzles, but it is also the application of science skills like predicting, explaining, planning experiments, and discussion.

A number of excellent high school textbooks are on the market for high school forensics classes. With the release of *Forensic Science*, Pearson has set a high standard for anyone else wanting to enter the middle school market.

Reviewed by Enrico Pelazzo

Autopsy: Voices of Death from autopsyvideo.com. (1999).

This video, on VHS or DVD, features legendary coroner-to-the-stars Thomas Noguchi, an assistant, and a medical student or intern. It is about 46 minutes long, and will certainly prompt discussion from whatever class it is shown to. The images are graphic; this is a full, real autopsy, and the viewer isn't spared any of the gory details. However, the viewer should be prepared to watch an autopsy performed in real time. This means there aren't fancy cutaways and when the camera comes back an entire organ system has been removed and is now on the scale.



(Continued on page 15)

