

Fingerprint Features

Fingerprint analysts use tiny differences between fingerprints to make matches between samples. In addition to the shapes of the ridges that make up the print, analysts use points of comparison, which are the spots where the ridges split or end.

Here are some of the different fingerprint features that experts use to help identify prints.



Whorl Loop Island



Fork Arch Delta

Did You Know?

In addition to fingertips, other body parts have patterns that can be used for matching people to prints. You can use the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, or toes, but you can't use noses because they have no ridges.

Fiber Optics

If you've ever worn a wool sweater, you may have found fibers or bits of material in your hair, on your jacket, or covering your pants. Clothing has a funny way of unraveling. Threads found at a crime scene can tell police something about what the suspect was wearing at the time of the crime.



You Will Need

Piece of thread or cloth made from any of the following materials:
silk, wool, cashmere, nylon, polyester, linen, cotton, mixed blends
(or, you can use small loose fibers vacuumed from a carpet)

Scissors
Slides
Coverslips
Eyedropper
Water
Microscope
Pen
Paper