

Instructions:

With a partner, analyze the handwriting in the ransom note and the 10 suspects. Be thorough and make sure you write at least 6 observations for the ransom note and each suspect. Once you have the data collected and you have determined who wrote the ransom note, you must write a written report. The written report must be turned in along with the data you collect in your assessment.

1. The purpose of the written report is to convince the members of the jury that you are an expert in the area of handwriting analysis.
2. You are able to analyze handwriting samples and show the jury evidence of how the samples are similar or dissimilar. Through your investigation, you have been able to conclude that one or more samples match the ransom note.
3. Keep in mind that mist juries have no knowledge of handwriting analysis. They may be highly educated, or they may have very little formal education. Therefore, any terms you use must be clearly defined.

Format

1. Introduction (10 points)
 - a. State the purpose of your report.
 - b. No factual or detailed information should be in the introduction.
 - c. State how you analyzed the handwriting.
 - i. State how many different characteristics you used.
 - ii. State if it was possible to prove someone wrote the note, or merely that the handwriting was similar.
2. Pick either Option 1 or Option 2. (60 points)
 - a. Option 1 Body Paragraphs (at least 6)
 - i. One or two characteristics per paragraph.
 - ii. For each characteristic, you need to:
 1. Describe the characteristic.
 2. Compare the characteristic from each writer's handwriting to the ransom note.
 3. Remember that you need to explain these terms to the jury and convince them that your comparisons are correct.
 - b. Option 2 Body Paragraphs (at least 6)
 - i. One or two suspects per paragraph.
 - ii. For each suspect, you need to compare what elements of their handwriting did or did not match the ransom note.
3. Conclusion
 - a. Summarize your findings.
 - b. How reliable in your conclusion?
 - c. Is handwriting evidence enough to convict someone?
 - d. Is this an important piece of evidence?

Handwriting Analysis

Criteria for examination:

1. Line Quality: How do the letters flow

- Smooth, shaky or juvenile

2. Word or Letter Spacing

- average space between words and letters

3. Letter Comparison / Size Consistency

- height of letters, ratio of height to width consistency

4. Continuous / Pen Lifts

- Is the writing continuous or does the writer lift the pen during a word, capital letters connected to lower case letters, pen lifts between words
- equal on all letters?

5. Connected Letters

- Are capitals and lower-case letters connected or continuous?

6. Letters Complete

- Are letters completely formed? Or is part of the letter missing?

7. Cursive or Printed Letters

- Are there printed letters, cursive letters or both?

8. Pen Pressure

- Is pressure equal when applied to upward and downward strokes?

9. Slant

- Left, right, or variable?

10. Line Habits

- Is the text written on the line or below or above?

11. Fancy Writing

- Any fancy curls or embellished letters

12. Diacritic Placement

- how are t's crossed and l's dotted