

# FINGERPRINT PATTERNS

## OVERVIEW

In this activity, you'll learn a simple way to see your fingerprint.

The uniqueness of a fingerprint makes it a critical piece of evidence to collect at a crime scene. Once collected and visualised, fingerprint patterns can be analysed to determine whether it has an arch, loop or whorl pattern.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The most common fingerprint patterns are loops, occurring in 60 - 65% of the population. The second most common patterns are whorls, in 30 - 35% of the population. The least common patterns are arches, occurring in only 5% of the population.

### MATERIALS

- A dark coloured marker pen (water soluble ink for ease of cleaning!)
- Balloon
- Magnifying glass



WATCH THE VIDEO LINK



IDEAL FOR ALL AGES



ADULT SUPERVISION RECOMMENDED

## METHOD

1. Gently colour your thumb (or finger) with a dark coloured marker pen.
2. Press the inked thumb (or finger) onto the balloon. Be careful when pressing your finger! Don't smear or rub your finger on the balloon, as the final print will not have a clear pattern.
3. Wait at least 1 one minute (and up to 1 hour) so that the ink can dry onto the balloon.
4. Blow the balloon up to enlarge the fingerprint. If your fingerprint looks blurry, let some air out of the balloon until the print is clear.

5. Compare your print to the fingerprint patterns:



ARCH



LOOP



WHORL

6. What pattern does your fingerprint have?

### WANT TO DO MORE?

Try out the other fingerprint activities in this series: **'Lifting fingerprints'** and **'Fingerprint fuming'**.