

What Forensic Science Is

Criminal Justice

Science applied to questions a court has to decide, and the limits of that.

Forensic science answers defined questions about material; it does not decide cases.

TWO LEVELS

Source level · activity level

REPORTING

Strength of support, not certainty

- Source and activity are separate questions
- Disciplines differ greatly in how far they are validated
- An analysis is only as good as the sample
- Findings support inferences, they are not verdicts
- A report should state its limits and assumptions

LOOK FOR IT

Whose material it is, and how it got there, are different questions.

Educational reference. Validation and accreditation standards differ between jurisdictions and between disciplines.