Key Concepts of Chapter 1:

- **The Value of Physical Evidence:** It is possible for physical evidence to do the following:
  - Prove a crime has been committed or establish key elements of a crime
  - Place a suspect in contact with the victim or with the crime scene
  - Establish the identity of persons associated with the crime
  - Exonerate the innocent
  - Corroborate the victim’s testimony
  - Elicit admissions or confessions
  - Provide a more reliable witness to crime than eyewitnesses
  - Meet juries’ expectations in criminal cases

- **Classification v Individualization:**
  - Not every piece of physical evidence can be directly related to a specific person, place, or thing. Some types of physical evidence may come from one and only one source whereas most physical evidence may only be associated with a class or group of objects.
  - *Individualization* is linking a substance or item to one specific person or thing. For example, when a fingerprint examiner says a latent print was made by a specific individual, and no other, that is individualization.
  - However, when a footwear examiner determines that the questioned footwear impression was made by a *Nike Air Jordan* size 9 sneaker, it is considered *Classification* as those are class characteristics that places the impression into a group of potential sources.

- **Collection and Preservation:**
  - The proper techniques of collection and preservation of physical evidence are centered on legal and scientific issues.
  - Legal issues would refer to the right to seize evidence, chain of custody documentation, the secure storage of evidence, and the correct labeling of evidence.
  - Scientific issues would include the collection of sufficient material, the collection of controls and standards, and that evidence was packaged properly for preservation.

- **Role of the Crime Scene Specialist (Technician/Investigator) and the Forensic Scientist:**
  - Forensic scientists, crime scene specialists, and latent fingerprint experts are the individuals whose job it is to apply science and technology to the solution of criminal acts.
  - All forensic practitioners owe a duty to truth.
  - They should never be biased and have an obligation not to overstate or understate scientific findings.
• Teamwork:
  o The full investigation of criminal acts involves scores of people who often work for different organizations. The more people, the more important teamwork is to a successful investigation.
  o Each person has a role to play and each element must be accomplished in a responsible, professional, and timely manner.

Key Concepts of Chapter 5:
• Plan of Action:
  o The crime scene must be approached in a systematic, methodical way
  o Certain steps must be performed before others
  o Considerations about legal and scientific matters must be made when searching a crime scene
  o These details require a method of approach or plan of action
  o This documented procedure should be available to crime scene investigators so that responsibilities, tasks and order of tasks are clearly defined
• Note taking:
  o Note taking forces investigators to commit observations to writing and to keep a detailed record of everything observed and accomplished. The following is a list of general points about notes and note taking:
    ▪ Keep notes as events occurred in chronological order
    ▪ Notes should detail step by step all actions taken
    ▪ Notes should be complete and thorough
    ▪ Notes should be clearly written and legible
    ▪ Negative or unexpected conditions should be noted
    ▪ Notes should be as specific as possible
    ▪ Never discard case notes, sketches, tape recordings, etc
• Crime Scene Search: Processing a crime scene involves the following:
  o Surveying the crime scene
  o Photographing and sketching the crime scene
  o Mapping and measuring the crime scene
  o Recording the location of the physical evidence
  o Searching for fingerprints and other physical evidence
• Photography:
  o Before a detailed examination of the crime scene is made or before any items are moved or touched, the crime scene should be photographed
  o The photographs should be taken to clearly depict the scene as it was found and detailed photographs of physical evidence in the condition they were in prior to their removal
- The admissibility of a photograph relies on the investigator being able to testify that the photograph accurately depicts the area shown and that the subject matter is represented properly in terms of color, scale, and form.
- The photographs must be in focus and should show relationships to (and found within) the scene.

- Sketching the Crime Scene:
  - Sketches clarify the appearance of the crime scene.
  - A sketch is NOT an architectural drawing but rather a diagram that offers a permanent record of the relationships of items at the scene to each other and the overall layout.
  - Sketches are admissible in court when there is someone to testify to their authenticity.

- Collection of Evidence:
  - It is useful to set priorities of what evidence should be collected first (for example, fingerprints which are often fragile).
  - After all the “fragile” evidence is collected, the scene should be walked through again to look for things that were missed.
  - When collecting evidence, steps should be taken to prevent breakage, spillage, or contamination that could destroy its value.
  - The evidence containers should be sealed and clearly marked with unique identifiers.
  - Don’t forget to DICED your collected evidence:
    - Date/Time of collection
    - Initials of person collecting evidence
    - Case number assigned to scene
    - Exhibit number or Evidence item number
    - Description of evidence and Location where found

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**REFERENCES**
