



# Observation, Remembering, & Recording





# How many Differences can you spot?





# Did you spot 15??





# Importance of Observations

1. The forensic examiner must be able to **FIND**—identify the evidence.
2. The forensic examiner must be able to **DOCUMENT**—record the evidence.
3. The forensic examiner must be able to **INTERPRET**—accurately determine the significance of the evidence.



# Importance of Observation

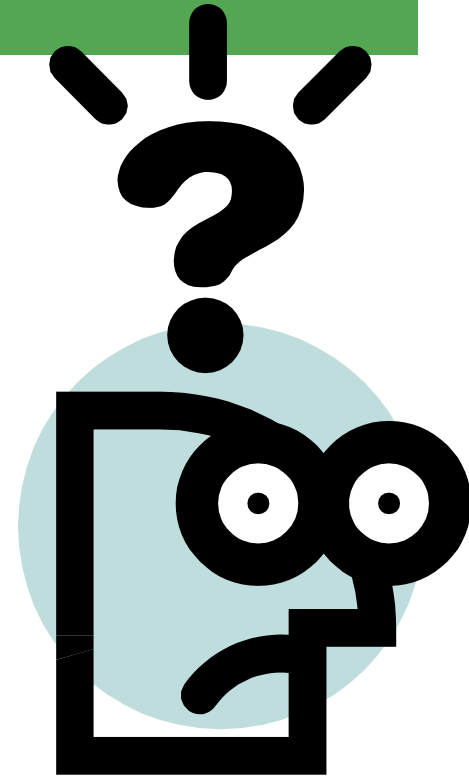
- Basis for all crime scene investigation
- Finding the facts without bias (driven by your own emotions or ideas)
- Allows you to find clues or tail a suspect
- Creates in mind images of what a person sees which can be stored in order for the person to remember later





# Why Do You Need to Remember Your Observations?

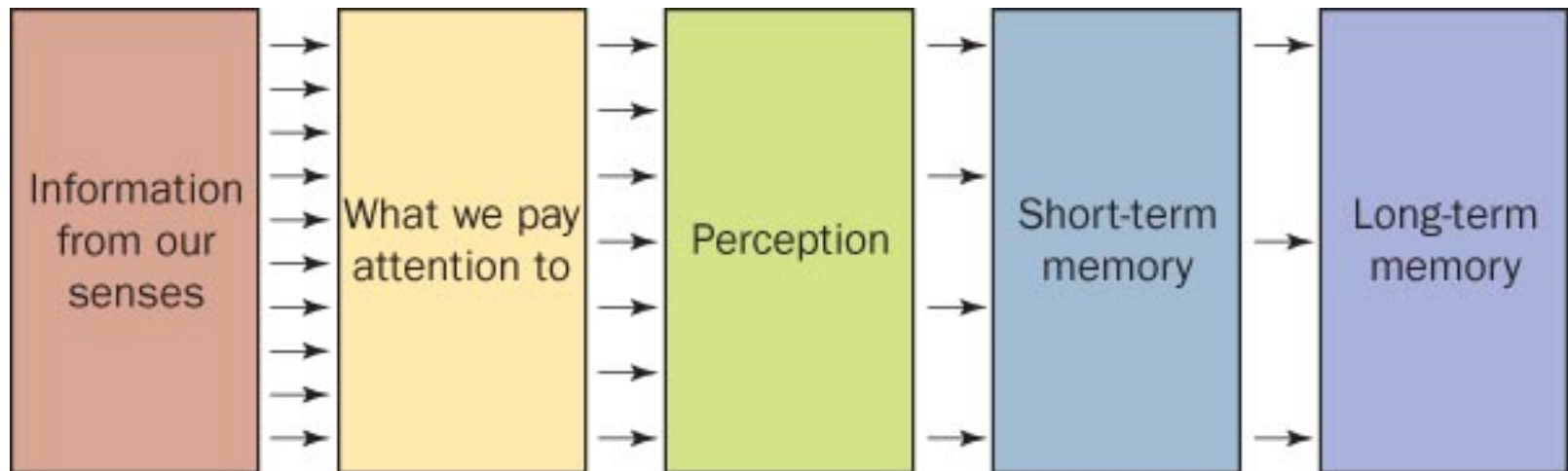
- To testify in court where you must know the **details** months after you made your observations
- Inadequate information and details will allow **a criminal to get off !!!!!**





# So what is an observation in forensic science?

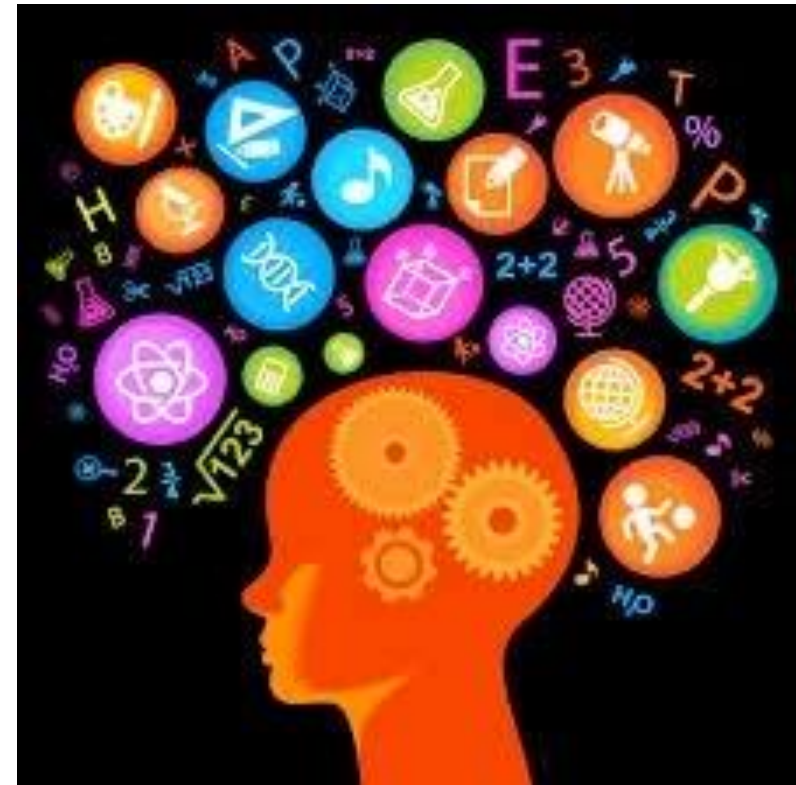
How information is processed in the brain





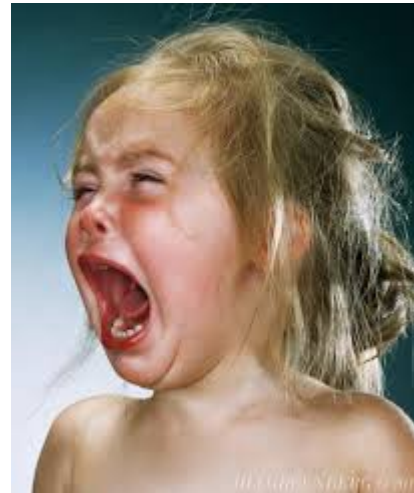
# What Is Observation?

Our brain can **FILTER** out information, as well as fill in **GAPS** in our perception.





In order to make sense of what we perceive, our brains often enrich with detail what we **see, taste, hear, smell, or feel.**

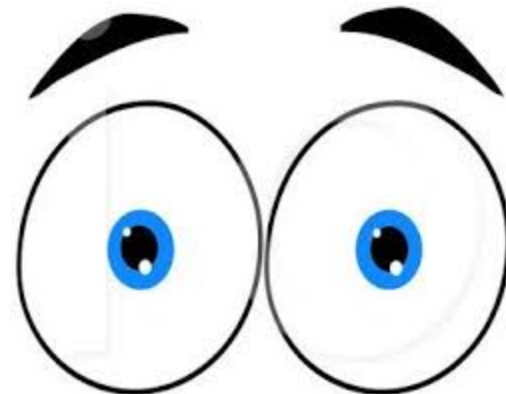




# What Is Observation?

- After an event, we can believe things were part of the **BACKGROUND** even though they were not.

**OBSERVE** the following picture for 30 seconds, and then answer the questions that follow!







- How many cars were in the intersection?
- Across the street, are there any parked cars on the side?
- Can you describe at least one of the cars driving through the intersection?
- Are there any other potential witnesses?
- What was this witness doing? Where was he?
- What was the speed limit?
- What color was the dog in the yard?



•How many cars were in the intersection?

*Answer: 2*

•Across the street, are there any parked cars on the side? *Yes, 2*

•Can you describe at least one of the cars driving through the intersection?

*White van, blue/gray station wagon car*

•Are there any other potential witnesses? *Yes*

What was this witness doing? Where was he?

*There was a person mowing a lawn across the street.*

•What was the speed limit? *35*

•What color was the dog in the yard? *There wasn't a dog!*



# What Is Observation?

Our brains apply previous **KNOWLEDGE** to new situations.



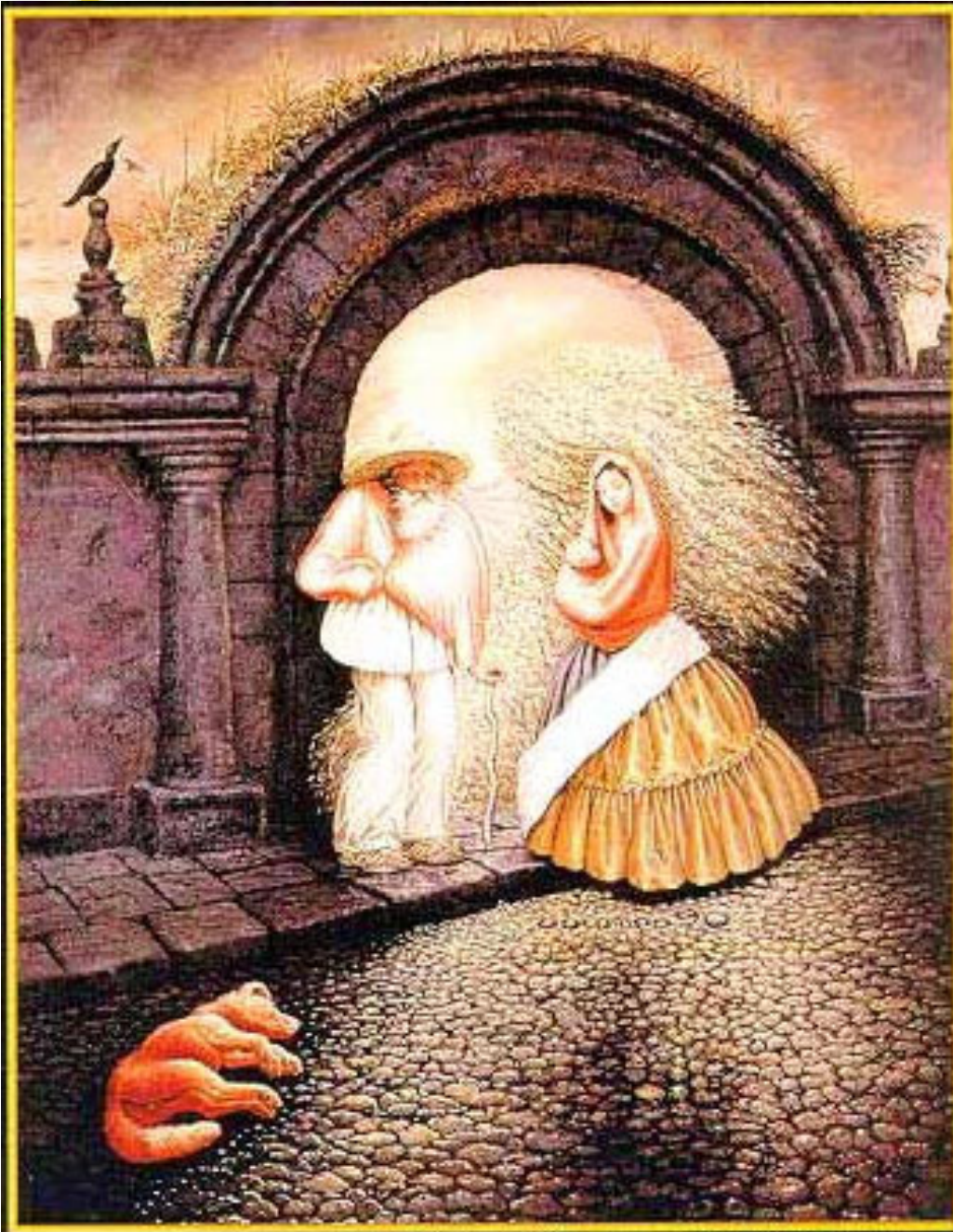
What assumptions can you make about this scene?







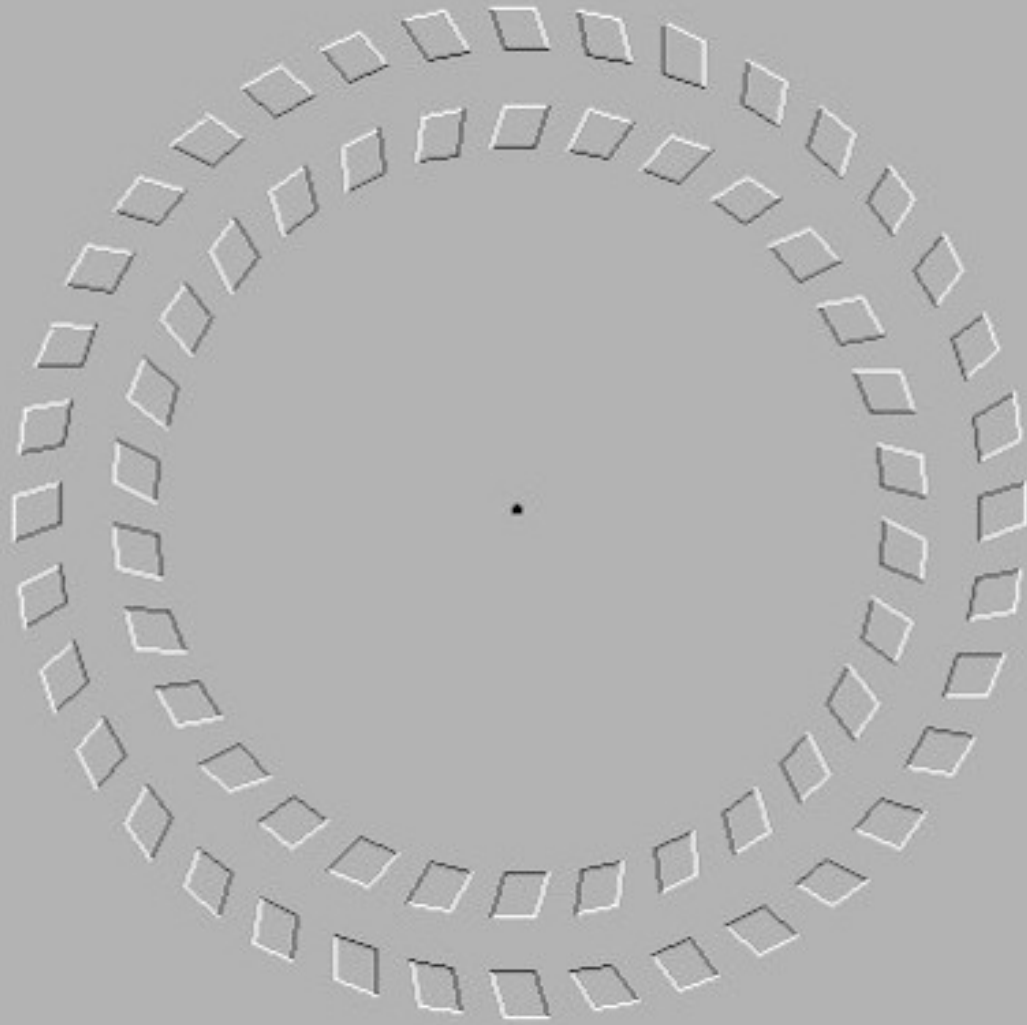




HOW MANY  
PEOPLE/  
FACES  
ARE THERE  
IN THE  
SCENE?







FOCUS ON THE DOT IN THE CENTRE AND MOVE YOUR HEAD BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS.  
WEIRD HEY...



Count every " F" in the following text:

FINISHED FILES ARE THE  
RESULT OF YEARS OF  
SCIENTIFIC STUDY  
COMBINED WITH  
THE EXPERIENCE OF  
YEARS...



The answer??

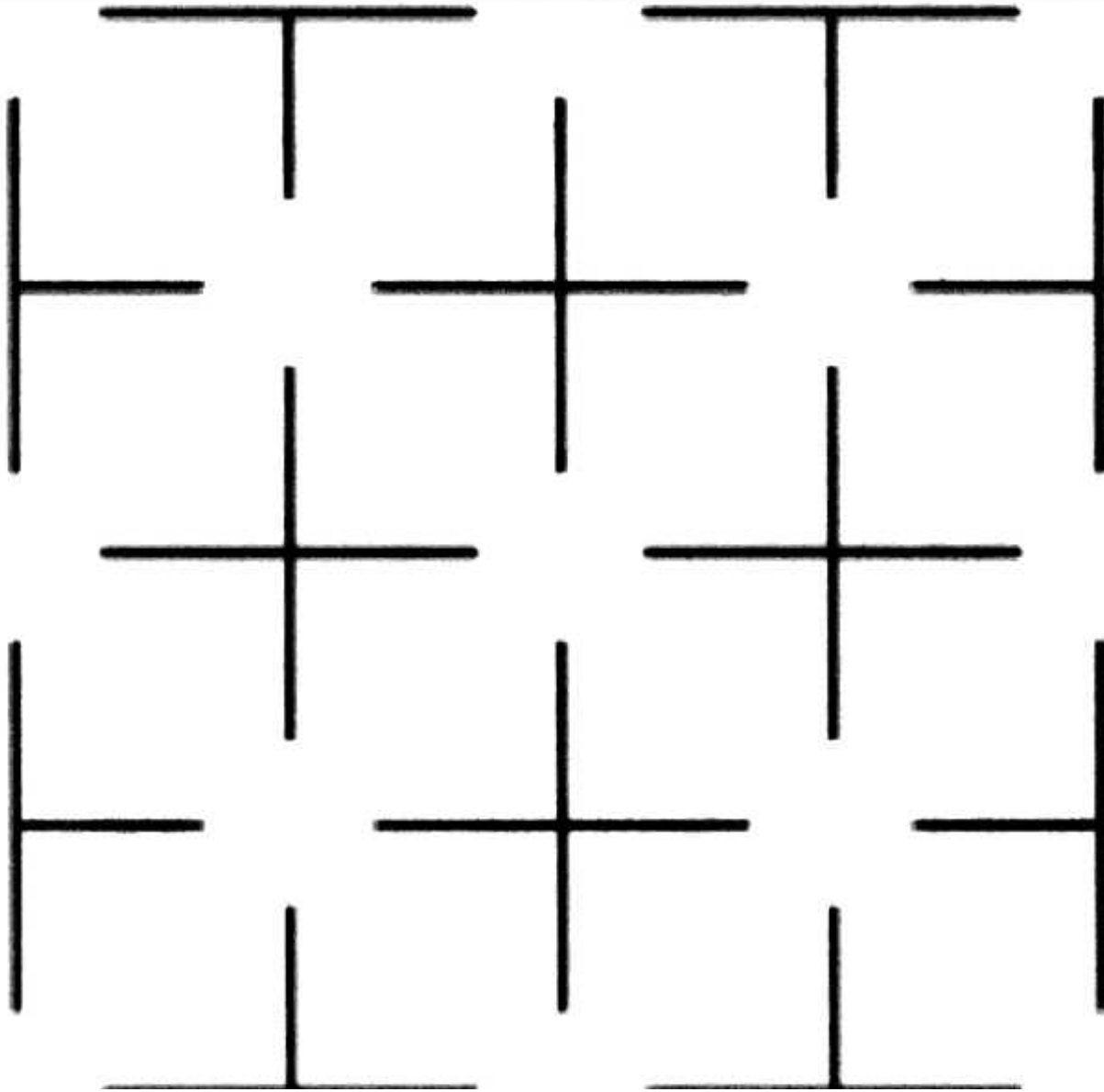
6

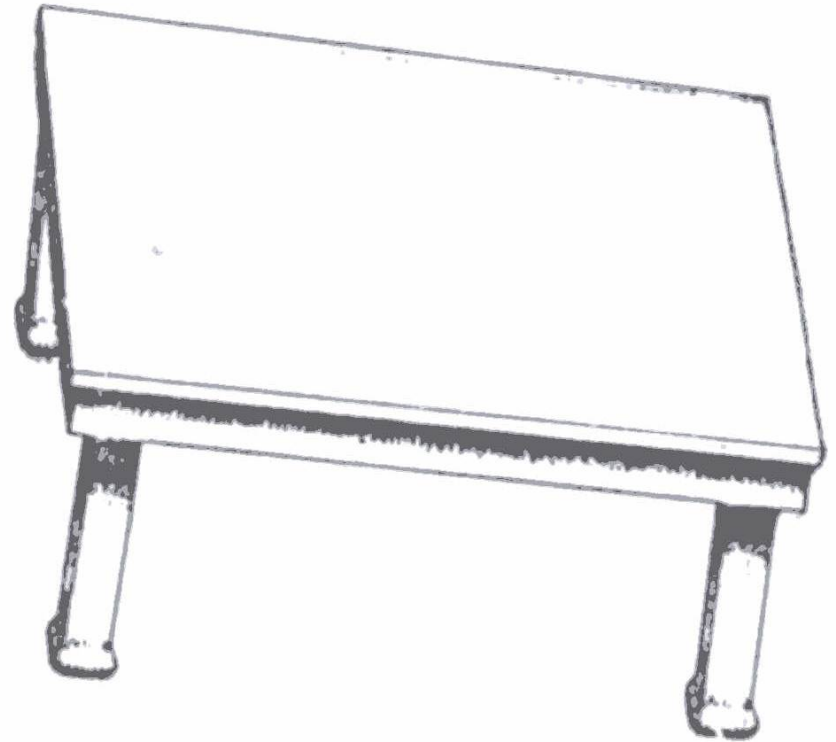
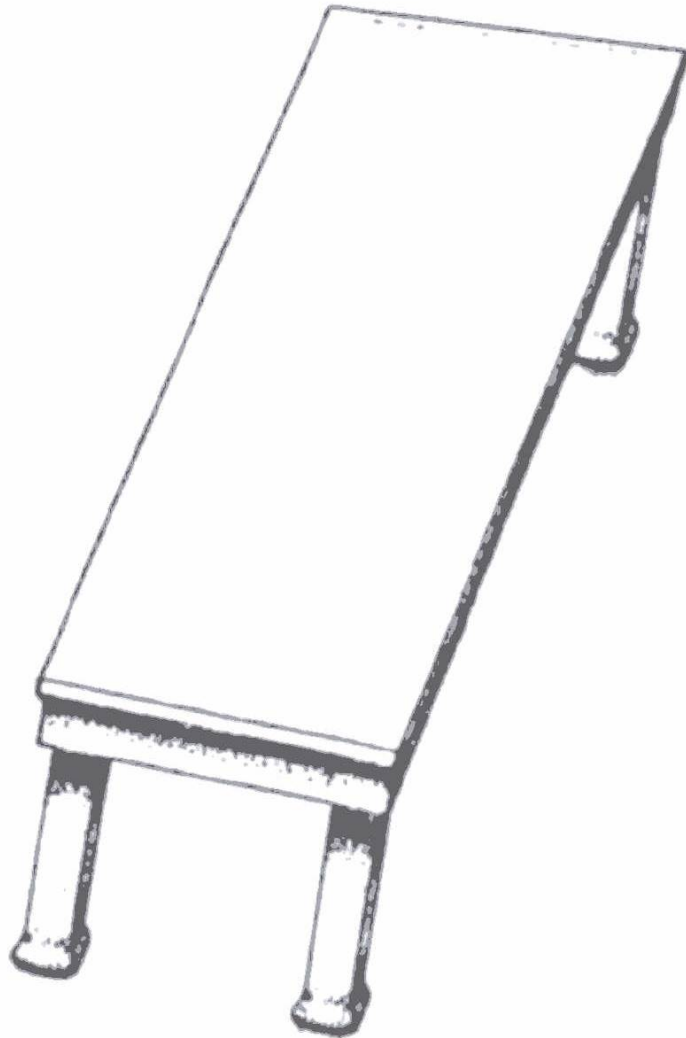


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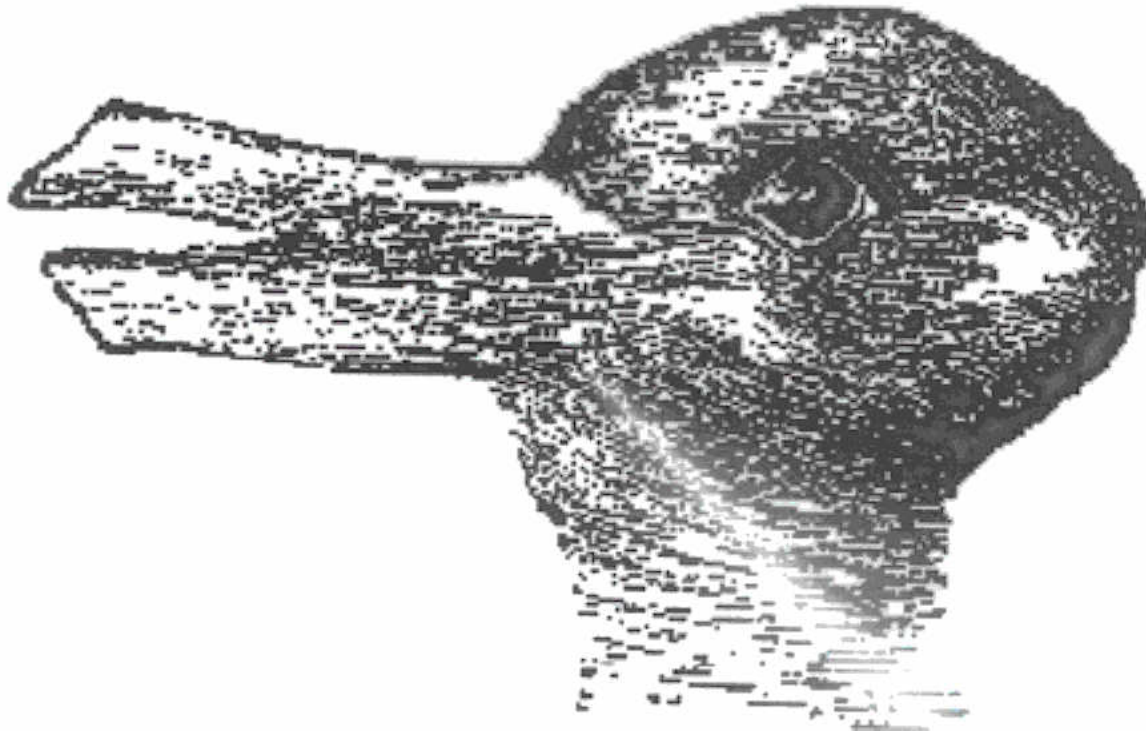




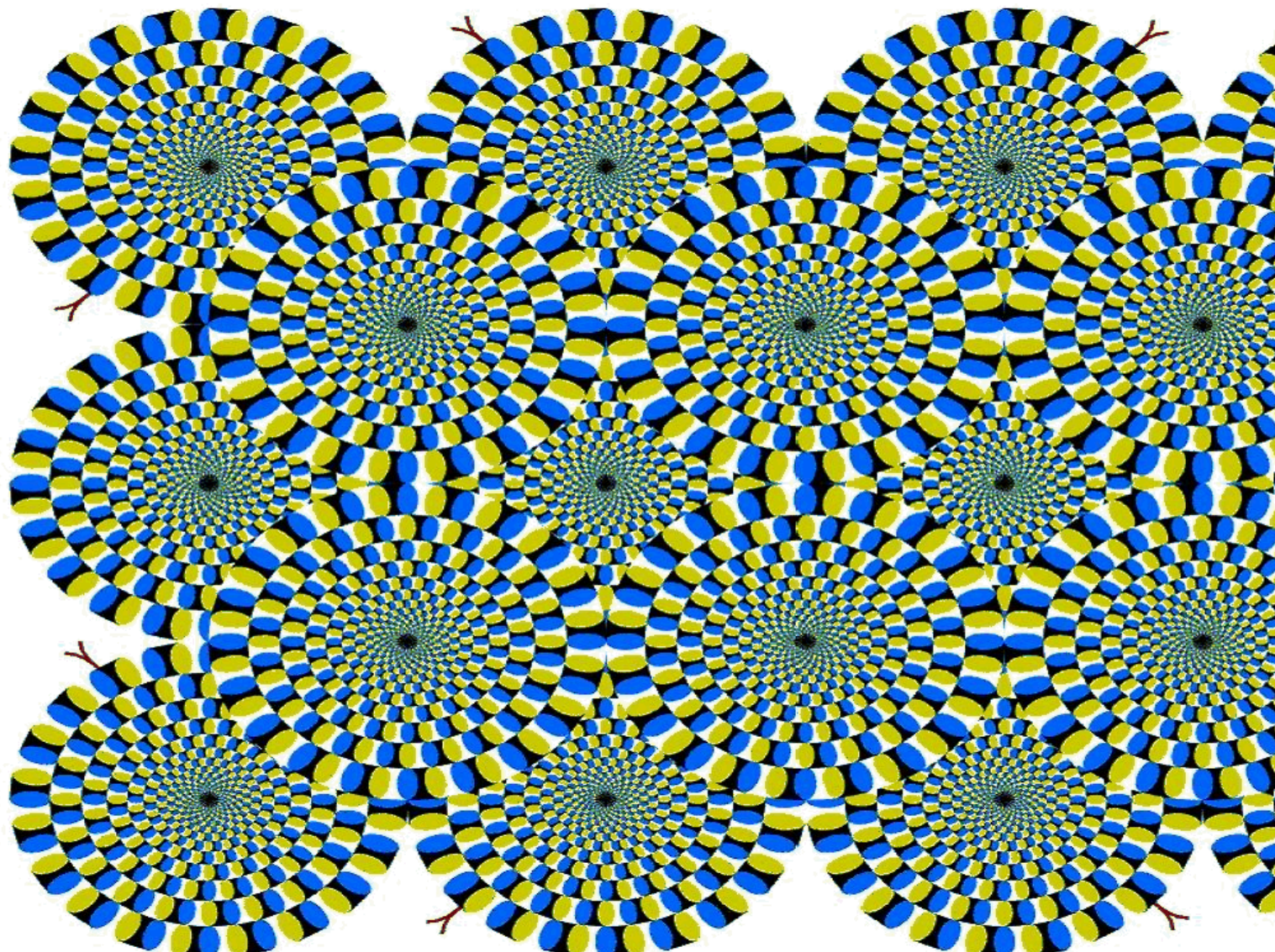
Are the tables the same size and shape?



# What do you see?



# What is happening in this picture?



# Observations by Witnesses

are affected by:



- their **EMOTIONAL** states.
- whether they were **ALONE**, part of a **GROUP**
- whether **OTHERS** were in the area
- what type of and how much **ACTIVITY** was going on around them.
- **PREJUDICES**, beliefs, motives and lapse in time



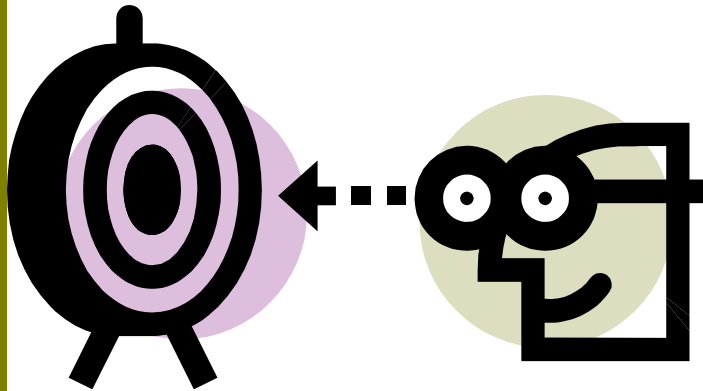
# Eyewitness Accounts

- Reports from individuals about crime-scene events often vary.





# What do You Need to Remember as an Eyewitness?



- You want to describe:
  - **Who** was involved?
  - **What** happened?
  - **When** did it take place?
  - **Where** did it take place?
  - **How** did it happen?
  - Anything else **unusual** or out of the ordinary



# How to be a good Forensic observer

## Observe **systematically**—

- Start at one part of a crime scene and run your eyes slowly over every space.
- Slowly look at every part of a piece of evidence.
- **Do not assume that later on you will be able to remember everything.**





# How to be a good Forensic observer

## Turn off **filters**—

- Do not pay attention to only what you think is important.
- On a crime scene you will not know what will turn out to be important.
- **Make a conscious effort to pay attention to all the details in your surroundings.**



# How to be a good Forensic observer

Leave the final **interpretation** of data until later—

- Do look for patterns and make connections.
- But the more information obtained, the better will be the interpretations.
- Remember that **eyewitness accounts and your own thinking can include prejudices.**



# How to be a good Forensic observer

## Documentation (documentation, documentation, documentation)

- It is important to write down and photograph as much information as possible.
- Keep in mind that memory is faulty.
- **Remember that our brains tend to automatically fill in gaps in our perceptions.**



# Tools Used to Enhance Observations

- **Cameras, video recorders**... record observations so they can be viewed again.
- **Microscopes** provide fast, low-cost, and definitive results whether it's simple hand-lenses or more the more powerful types found in labs
- **Ultraviolet** and **infrared** lights can reveal hidden evidence our eyes can't see



# Observations in Forensics

Most of all, observations require:

Persistence

Patience

Practice