

# MODULE 6-FINGERPRINT ANALYSIS

## BACKGROUND

According to professional criminal investigators, fingerprints follow three fundamental principles:

1. A fingerprint is an individual characteristic; no two people have been found that share the exact same fingerprint pattern.
2. A fingerprint will remain unchanged for the life of an individual.
3. Fingerprints have general characteristic ridge patterns that allow them to be systematically identified.

There are three specific classes for all fingerprints based upon their general visual pattern. These are: arches, loops, and whorls. Each group is further sub-divided based upon smaller differences existing between the patterns within the specific group. The sub-categories are listed below.

Arch	Loop	Whorl
Plain arch	Radial loop	Plain whorl
Tented arch	Ulnar loop	Central pocket loop whorl
		Double loop whorl
		Accidental whorl

The individuality of any fingerprint is based not upon the general shape or pattern that it forms, but instead upon its ridge and specific characteristics (minutiae). The recognition of these ridges, their rela-



### DID YOU KNOW?

English anthropologist Francis Galton, a first cousin of Charles Darwin, first worked out the use of fingerprints for identification purposes.

