



PLTW Virtual Learning

Medical Detectives

Lesson 31

May 18, 2020



7 & 8 Grade Medical Detectives

Lesson: Forensic Anthropologists, May 18, 2020

Objective/Learning Target:
Lesson 31, Part 1

Students will learn how forensic anthropologists are an important part of the CSI investigative team.

Disclaimer: Forensic Anthropologists work with human skeletons to solve crimes and mysteries. If you find this upsetting, in any way, please do not proceed with this lesson.

Warm-Ups:

What do you know about Forensic Anthropologists?

What do they do?

What do they work with?

How are they involved in criminal investigations?

How can a forensic anthropologist solve a crime or mystery?

Can skeletal bones ever get too old to tell a story?

Take one minute to answer these questions and write everything you know about this topic.

[One-Minute Timer](#)



Lesson Introduction/Background Information:

Forensic Anthropologist: The primary task of a forensic anthropologist is to gather and interpret evidence to assist in the identification of human remains and determine the cause of death. Their study of human remains aids in the detection of a crime by working to assess the age, sex, stature, ancestry and unique features of a skeleton, which may include documenting trauma to the skeleton and its postmortem interval. Therefore, forensic anthropology is considered a criminal justice career.

Click on the link to the right, which will take you to the website, [Becoming a Forensic Anthropologist](#). Read over the information about becoming a Forensic Anthropologist, scroll, down to the last video on the page that looks like the link to the right and let's watch [Meet the Smithsonian's Bone Detectives](#).



Practice:

We're going to learn more about how forensic anthropologists learn from the bones they find, and examine, and are actual CSI Investigators. Once again, click on the link, to the right, which will take you to the same web page and scroll to the first video,

[Bone Biographies of Early Americans.](#)

Watch the video to see exactly what they do, how they can investigate history and find a plethora of information.

What are three takeaways you have after watching this video? How would you like to be involved in this type of research?



Practice:

As you're learning the interesting, exciting and intricate work of forensic anthropologists, let's go further to see exactly how this is done and how they extract human skeletons from the grave.

Once again, click on the link to the right, going to the web page and watch the second video on the page,

[Unearthing the Evidence: Burial Excavations](#)

Is this something you would like to do? Why do they have to be so careful when excavating the skeleton?



Self Assessment:

After watching the three videos:

****Meet the Smithsonian's Bone Detectives**

****Bone Biographies of Early Americans**

****Unearthing the Evidence: Burial Excavations**

You've learned how forensic anthropologists are an extremely important part of the CSI investigation team. In your next lessons, you will see how this information helps to solve different forensic, both old and new cases.

Answer the following questions:

- 1) Is there a time limit on how old bones can be before they are able to retrieve information? How old were some of the cases you watched on the video?
- 2) What are some of the different types of information bones can provide?
- 3) Why is it important to gain information from old human skeletons found?
- 4) Use information from bones, can they even determine what the person looked like?

Extend Your Learning/Continued Practice:

Watch the video, by clicking on the link, to take you to the web page to watch

[Skeletal Growth - Skeleton Keys.](#)

Once you've watched the video,

read about Bone Basics,

Bone Biographies and

Today's Bones to learn how

someone's bones can tell

everything about them and

about the history that surrounded them.

