



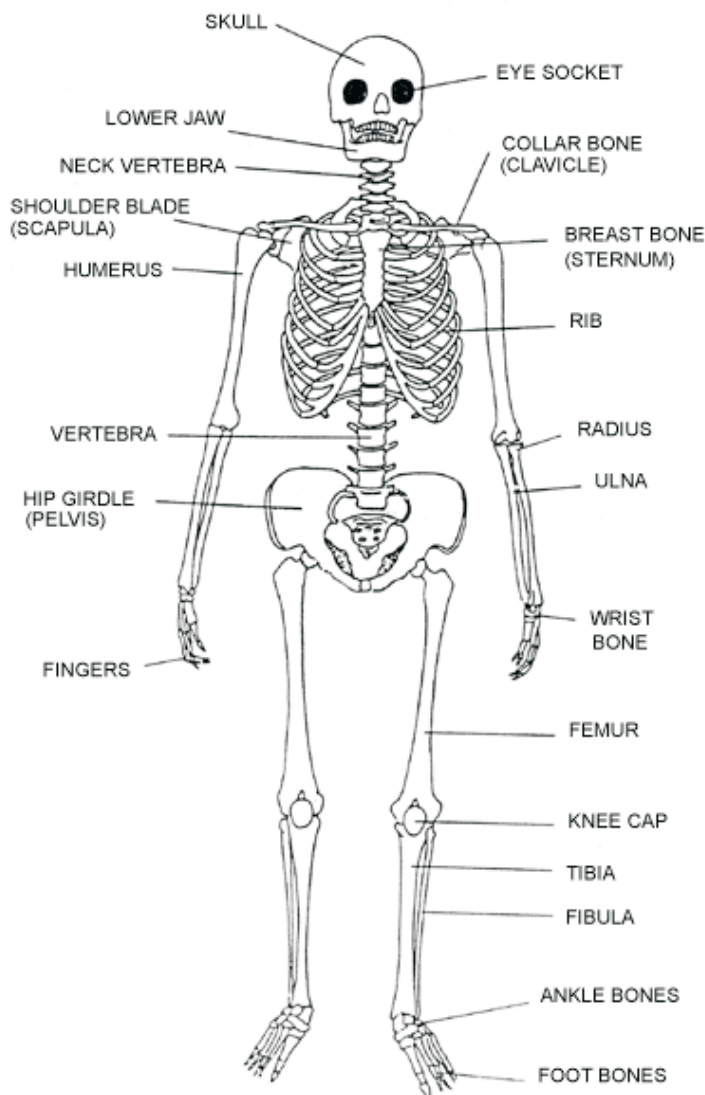
# An Archaeological Mystery

## Human Bones 1



Human bones do not always survive long enough in the ground for archaeologists to dig them up.

**WHY?** Some soil is much more **ACIDIC** than the bones so they dissolve quickly. But sometimes, the soil is more **ALKALI** (the opposite of acidic) and so the bones last long enough to be found by archaeologists. When we can find human bones they tell us lots of things, like **WHAT THE PERSON MIGHT HAVE LOOKED LIKE WHEN THEY WERE ALIVE!**



Whilst we were digging at the hillfort we found the buried bones from a few different people. Some of the skeletons were incomplete. Some of the bones we found were very small indeed. SKELETON 1 in the picture above was almost complete.

**CAN YOU SEE WHICH PARTS OF THE SKELETON ARE MISSING OR BROKEN?**

**WHY DO YOU THINK THEY WERE MISSING OR BROKEN?**



# An Archaeological Mystery

## Human Bones 1



Once the bones have been carefully removed from the ground they are examined closely by the bone specialists. By looking for clues on the bones the specialist can note anything unusual. For example, bones often show how healthy a person would have been when they were alive. Look at these bones from some of the skeletons from the hillfort.



**Which part of the body do you think it came from?**

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**Which bone do you think this is?**

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**What can you notice about these teeth?  
Do you think they look healthy? Why?**

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# An Archaeological Mystery

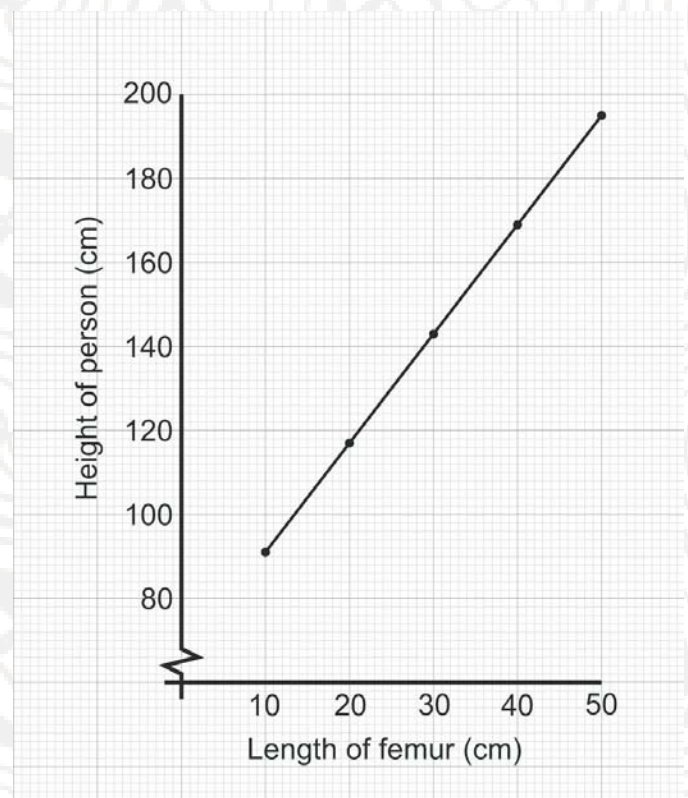
## Human Bones 3



As well as studying the bones to find out about disease and diet we can find out whether the person was male or female and how tall they would have been. This can also help us to work out approximately how old they were. The graph below shows that you can work out how tall a person would have been by measuring their femur (thigh bone).

Skeleton 1 has a femur measuring 35.5cm. How tall would the person have been when they were alive?

Skeleton 2 has a femur measuring 42cm. How tall would the person have been when they were alive?



**Get a tape measure and see how tall these people would have been when they were standing up.**

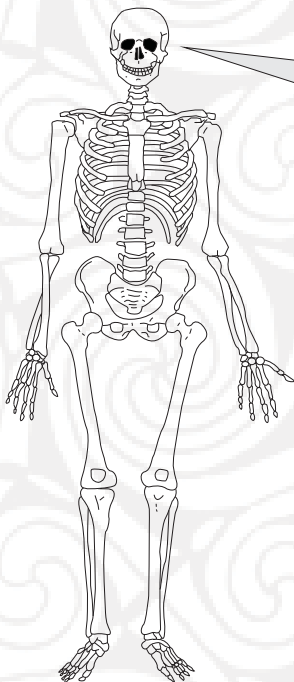
**Before reading on, do you think they would have been adults, teenagers or children?**





# An Archaeological Mystery

## Human Bones 4



Skeletons 1 and 2 were both found in **LAYER 5**.

Both **SKELETON 1** and **SKELETON 2** were young women, and both of them had the bones of young babies with them.

**SKELETON 2** was about 25 years old and her hands did not have the signs of disease or hard work that we would expect for people living in the Iron Age.

The pictures above show the remains of **SKELETON 1** and **SKELETON 2**.