

LAB ASSIGNMENT

ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW

In this fictional scenario an unlabeled box of bones was found behind the fridge in the Anthropology Department office. No one seems to know where they came from. And to make matters worse, they have gone missing! Thankfully, someone had the presence of mind to take some photographs of the bones before they disappeared.

Now, with the help of these photographs, you have been asked to complete a basic analysis of the remains to try to learn as much about them as possible.

For this assignment, you will demonstrate your ability to identify and side bones from a fictional case study. You will also demonstrate your ability to perform sex and age estimation on unidentified human remains. Lastly, the data you collect and the interpretations you make will be used to assess the minimum number of individuals present in the case. This assignment is worth 20% of your mark.

SOME HELPFUL RESOURCES:

You should review your notes from our lectures on bone identification to help you to identify and analyze the bones in the photographs. If necessary, recordings of these lectures are also available online on our Moodle site.

eskeletons.org is another vital resource!

THIS LAB ASSIGNMENT HAS TWO PARTS:

1) Data collection: Start by describing the skeletal remains in the photographs (located on Moodle) in as much detail as you can. You are encouraged to consult with your colleagues and to work as a group. I forum will be posted on our Moodle site to allow you to collaborate and share notes.

2) Report write up: You will each *individually* summarize and discuss your results in a report. So, while you are permitted to collect data together and to share observations and interpretations, you **MUST** each hand in your own report.

PART 1: DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

1. Take a full inventory of the human skeletal remains present. In other words, a list of each bone. And, if possible, the side of the body it comes from.
2. For each element, provide an estimate of age at death. Categorize elements as belonging to sub-adults (juveniles) or adults. It is not necessary to be more precise for this exercise.
3. For each element for which it is possible (adult cranium, adult mandible, adult pelvis), provide an estimate of the sex of the individual.

4. Once you have compiled your data, produce an estimate of the minimum number of individuals (MNI). Be sure to consider duplicate elements, siding, sex and age. Disregard differences in size, robusticity and wear. Normally we would care about these things, but for this assignment we will keep things simple.

PART 2: WRITE YOUR REPORT

You are asked to individually write up your collected data, summarize, interpret, and report the results of your analyses. The essential components of your report are listed below.

1. **TITLE PAGE:** Includes a descriptive title (not just "Lab Report #1"), your name, your ID number, the course title/number, your instructor's name, and the submission date.
2. **INTRODUCTION:** No more than a paragraph. Explain in simple terms what you did and the context of the analysis. Also, make sure to summarize your results in a single sentence or two.
3. **METHODS:** Two to three paragraphs. Briefly describe all the methods you used. Explain clearly and concisely what steps you took, what traits you examined, and what equipment (if any) and resources you used. Be as precise as possible.
 - a) **NOTE:** This section should NOT include any results (they go in the next section). For example, you can state that you examined the traits of the pelvis, such as the greater sciatic notch, to provide an estimation of sex, but you should not talk about what you observed.
4. **RESULTS:** This section will have several elements.
 - a) **DESCRIPTION OF REMAINS:** Give a brief overview of the skeletal remains, including what was present and what condition they were in (Broken? Well preserved? Anything unusual?). Provide a table indicating what bones were present. Include data such as the name of the bone, side of bone, etc.
 - b) **MINIMUM NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS:** Clearly state the minimum number of individuals present (making sure to note their likely age and sex if possible). Make sure to justify your conclusions by drawing upon your data.
5. **DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS:** Use this section to offer a broader commentary on your analysis. You might comment on a number of topics, including the limitations of the study (what additional resources might have been useful), the context of the finds and the possibility of criminality, the nature of sex and age estimation, etc.
6. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** Did anyone help you that you should thank? (Hint: classmates). A single sentence is sufficient.

ASSESSMENT

You will be assigned a number of marks out of 10 based on the following criteria:

Mechanics

- Writing is clear and concise with few to no typos or grammatical errors (0-1)
- Appropriate terminology is used throughout (0-1)
- /2

Results

- Osteological data is accurately compiled and well presented (0-1)
- Evidence is provided to support each age and sex estimation (0-2)
- Evidence provided allows for logical/correct interpretation of sex and/or age (0-2)
- /5

Discussion

- Attempt to address some of the issues/limitations of your methods and/or results (0-2)
- Commentary is relevant and substantive (0-1)
- /3

TOTAL /10