

THE SKELETON

Activities

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ACTIVITY 1 LET'S FIND OUT ABOUT SKELETONS

1. Topic: Skeleton

2. Level: Years 3 and 4

3. Aims:

- To present the names of the bones

4. Resources: Quiz ([Template 1.1](#)) and information sources – encyclopaedias, textbooks, photocopies and/or Google ([Template 1.2](#)). As an example I have included a skeleton information sheet, if you do not have access to the above resources.

5. Procedure:

- Hand out copies of the quiz

- Set a time limit

- In pairs, children look for the answers in the sources chosen. EITHER let them use dictionaries OR pre-teach key vocabulary (NOT the names of the bones).

- Correct with the whole class

- Class repetition to practice the pronunciation of the names

6. Reinforcement and Extension Activities

- Something extra: Early finishers can write their own questions about the text. When we finish the exercise, they can ask their questions to the class and the class have to try to find the answers as quickly as possible, alone or in teams.



TEMPLATE 1.1. A

SKELETON QUIZ

My name is: My group is:

Today is

1. How many bones are there in the human body?

My Guess:

The Correct Answer:

2. What are the functions of the skeleton?

My Guess:

The Correct Answer:

3. Which bones protect....

a) the brain?

b) the heart and lungs?

4. Write the names of these bones in the correct place on the human skeleton (Paper B):

Skull	spinal column
Femur	humerus
Kneecap	ulna
Radius	tibia
Fibula	pelvis
Sternum	ribs

Something Extra

Now write more questions of your own about the text.



TEMPLATE 1.1.B

SKELETON

My name is: My group is:

Today is

✎ Write the names of the bones in the correct place on the human skeleton



TEMPLATE 1.2

SKELETON INFORMATION SHEET



Human beings are vertebrates. They have a spinal column and a skeleton. The skeleton is made up of all the bones in the body. There are 206 bones in the human body.



Bones have many important functions. Bones support our body and give it shape. They protect important organs: for example our skull (the bones in our head) protects the brain, and our ribs protect our heart and lungs (see the diagram to understand this better). Our bones also help us to move.



The bones in our body are very hard. They contain a lot of calcium and other elements – many of these elements are also found in rocks! When we grow, our bones grow too. It is important to eat calcium when we are children if we want to have strong, healthy bones. We can get calcium from milk and milk products.



Some bones are long. The femur, in the leg, is the longest bone in the body. Some bones are short. Our spinal column is made up of a lot of short bones called vertebrae. Some bones are flat, like the bones in our head. The smallest bone in our body is inside our ear.



ACTIVITY 2

WRITING RACE

1. Topic: The skeleton

2. Level: Year 3

3. Aims

- to revise the topic of the human skeleton
- to practice the structure of sentences in English
- to create a meaningful way to practice writing in English

4. Resources: Envelopes containing cut-up sentences (Choose some from [Template 2.1](#))

5. Procedure

- Before the lesson: the teacher cuts up the sentences in [Template 2.1](#) and puts each sentence of jumbled-up words in an envelope. EITHER write each sentence on different colour card OR write the number of the sentence on the back of all the pieces. That way, if pieces get dropped on the floor, we know which set they belong to.
- Divide the class into groups of about 4 pupils. In each group one child should be designated as noise controller, telling the children in their group to speak more quietly if they start speaking too loudly. We should also point out to the children that it is a competition, so it is not in their own interests to let the other groups hear what they are saying.
- The teacher leaves the envelopes distributed throughout the classroom. There should be more envelopes than groups, so that we do not get "traffic jams".
- Set a time limit. When the timer rings or the teacher shouts "Stop!", everyone has to stop immediately and sit down, even if they are in the middle of a sentence.
- Each group starts at a different envelope. They must unjumble the words in the envelope to create a correct sentence and then, in turns, copy the sentence onto their answer sheet. When they finish, they must jumble up the cards and put them back in the envelope. They then go to another table and do the same with another envelope.
- When the first team complete all the envelopes, they shout "Stop!" and everyone sits down.
- We correct the sentences together (Teams swap answer sheets and correct each other's). One point for each totally correct sentence. Incomplete sentences (because they ran out of time) do not count. The team with the most points wins.



TEMPLATE 2.1

JUMBLED-UP SENTENCES

Human beings are vertebrates.

The skeleton is made up of all the bones in the body.

There are 206 bones in the human body.

Bones have many important functions.

Bones support our body and give it shape. Bones protect important organs.

Our skull protects the brain, and our ribs protect our heart and lungs.

Our bones help us to move.

The bones in our body are very hard.

When we grow, our bones grow too.

It is important to eat calcium when we are children if we want to have strong, healthy bones.

We can get calcium from milk and milk products.

Some bones are long.

The femur, in the leg, is the longest bone in the body. Some bones are short.

Our spinal column is made up of a lot of short bones called vertebrae.

Some bones are flat, like the bones in our head.

The smallest bone in our body is inside our ear.



ACTIVITY 3

DICTATION RACE

1. Topic: The skeleton

2. Level: From Year 3 upwards

3. Aims:

- To practice writing in a fun way
- To revise new vocabulary and information

4. Resources: Two texts cut up into single sentences on card.([Template 3.1](#)) One piece of writing paper and pencil for each team.

5. Procedure:

- Choose two texts the children are already familiar with. If necessary, adapt it so that sentences are shorter. Each text should contain the same number of sentences. Copy each text onto a different colour card and cut the cards up into single sentences.
- The children play in two teams. Let them choose a name for the team, and choose a noise controller (who has to control their team's level of noise) and an organizer (who decides the order in which the children come out to the front/write and makes sure they are ready when it is their turn).
- At the front of the classroom, the teacher puts the sentence cards in two piles. The two teams sit/stand around tables at the opposite end of the classroom (at least one child needs to sit at a table – this is the child who is going to write). Each team has a pencil and pen to write with.
- In turns, one child from each team comes to the front and takes a card from their pile. The teacher gives them a few seconds to read and memorise what is on the card. They then go back to their team and tell them. The child designated to write must write it down, but the whole team can help them/ tell them the correct spelling etc. If the child has forgotten what is on the card, they can go back and look at it again as many times as they want, but can not remove the card from the table at the front.
- When they finish one sentence, the next child in the team goes to the front of the class and does the same with the second sentence.
- When the first team finishes all their sentences, they shout "Stop!" and the game ends.
- The organizer organizes it so that every child gets one turn reading and one turn writing. Each text therefore needs a number of sentences equivalent to half the pupils in the class.



- When they finish, each team corrects the other team's work. One point for each completely correct sentence OR one negative point for each mistake.

TEMPLATE 3.1

TEAM 1

The skeleton supports our body.
Bones protect our organs.
The skull protects our brain.
The ribs protect our heart and lungs.
Bones can be long, short or flat.
The femur is the longest bone in our body.
The femur is in our leg.
The smallest bone in our body is in the ear.
The bones in the spinal column are short.
The bones in the skull are flat.
Bones help us to move.
When we grow, our bones grow too.

DICTATION RACE CARDS

TEAM 2

Human beings are vertebrates.
Our bones are very hard.
Bones contain calcium and other elements.
Children need to eat calcium.
We can get calcium from milk and cheese.
There are 206 bones in our body.
The skull is in our head.
The spinal column has a lot of small bones.
The humerus, ulna and radius are in the arm.
We need our skeleton to move.
The skeleton gives our body shape.
The femur, tibia and fibula are in the leg.



ACTIVITY 4

SKELETON TPR

1. Topic: Skeleton

2. Level: From Year 3 upwards

3. Aims:

- To recognise the names of the bones
- To reinforce the pronunciation by repeated listening
- To revise previously known parts of the body/ face and other action verbs

4. Resources: None

5. Procedure: A normal TPR activity. The teacher gives instructions and all the pupils carry them out. We include lots of "Touch your nose, touch your mouth etc., beginning with familiar words and then we move on to include some bones..." "Touch your femur, touch your skull" etc. At first, the teacher can do the actions with the children.

6. Variations:

- "Do as I say, not as I do": The teacher says "Touch your ribs", while touching her head. The children have to LISTEN and follow her instructions, and not simply copy her.
- "Touch your partner's....": Instead of touching their own body parts, they work in pairs. EITHER one of the children has to touch the parts of their partner's body, then they swap roles OR both children simultaneously touch their partner's body parts (with a well-behaved class, otherwise they can get silly).
- When they have played a few times, a child can act as the teacher, at the front of the class, giving instructions.
- We can play it as "Simon says", and eliminate children who make mistakes.
- Any of these activities works equally well with the names of the muscles, or a mixture of bones and muscles.

Comments: This activity can be included in each lesson on this topic, and periodically after we finish the topic. In this way, the children are constantly revising the names and are more likely to remember them for the future.



ACTIVITY 5

LET'S MOVE THOSE BONES!

1. Topic: Skeleton

2. Level: From Year 3 upwards

3. Aims

- To relate the names of the bones with their location
- To recognise the pronunciation of the names of the bones

4. Resources: None

5. Procedure: The teacher gives instructions "Move your eyes, move your femur, move your ulna" and the children have to do as the teacher says.

6. Variations: As in activity 4

- If the children are doing muscles too, the teacher can ask them which muscles they are using to move that bone and/or which muscles contract or relax in order to carry out that movement.
- The teacher says e.g. "Move your leg" and pupils have to do the action then say/write down which bones or muscles they have moved.



ACTIVITY 6

HELLO, SKELLY!

1. Topic: The skeleton

2. Level: Any

3. Aims

- To associate the names of the bones with their location

4. Resources: A life-size skeleton, labels ([Template 6.1](#))

5. Procedure:

- The teacher introduces our new friend, Skelly the skeleton, to the class. We can lift up his hand so that he waves to the children.

- The teacher puts a pile of the labels face down on the table. A child picks up a label and has to stick it (with blu-tack) onto the correct part of the skeleton. The whole class decide if it is in the correct place.

6. Variations

- It can be played in teams as a game, giving points for the correct answers

- The teacher can place the labels on the skeleton in the wrong places, and the children or teams have to put them in the right place

- Depending on the age/level of the children, we can include more or fewer bones

- In teams they can do the same game, but sticking the labels on the correct part of the body of their classmate: two children stand at the front of the class and the teacher simultaneously gives a copy of the same label to one person from each team. The first person to put the label in the right place wins a point.



FEMUR	HUMERUS
ULNA	RADIUS
SPINAL COLUMN	RIBS
PELVIS	STERNUM
KNEECAP	FIBULA
	TIBIA





ACTIVITY 7

SKELLY'S LITTLE SISTER

1. Topic: The skeleton

2. Level: From Year 3 upwards

3. Aims

- To practice the location, shape and names of the bones

4. Resources: Copies for each child of the skeleton cutout [Template 7.1](#)

Card

Scissors

Glue

Paper fasteners (13 per pupil)

5. Procedure.

- First prepare a skeleton at home and show it to the children, introducing it as Skelly's little sister (if you have already done activity 4 with the class skeleton)

- Show the children and explain how to make the skeleton. If you like, write the instructions on the board, too.

1. Stick the photocopies onto card. Make sure you stick it well.

2. Cut out the bones. In small letters write your name in pencil on the back of each bone.

3. Make holes where the bones have to stick together where there is a small circle . Use a metal skewer or a pin or a sharp pencil to make the holes.

4. Assemble the skeleton with the paper fasteners, following the model on your photocopy.

5. On the back of the skeleton write the names of the corresponding bones.

6. Variations

- The children can play in pairs doing TPR with their skeletons – "Touch/move your skeleton's femur"etc.



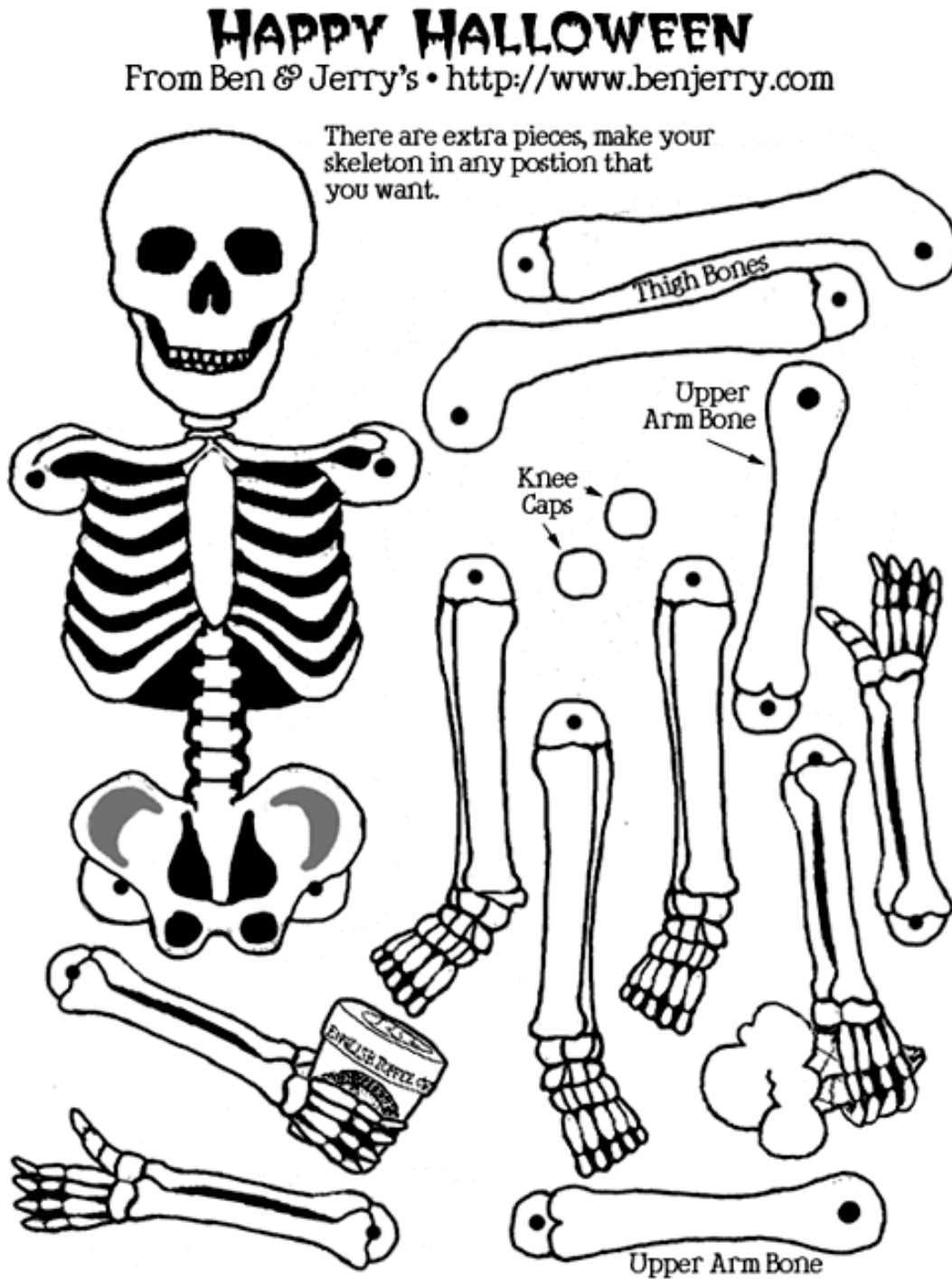
TEMPLATE 7.1

SKELETON CUT OUT

My name is: My group is:

Today is

✂ Cut the pieces of the skeleton and make Skelly's little sister



(This is just a model, but we can design our own one)



ACTIVITY 8

SKELETON MEASUREMENTS

1. Topic: The skeleton

2. Level: Year 3

3. Aims

- To practice measuring and recording information
- To revise the names of some of the key bones
- To learn that bones grow

4. Resources:

- Tape measures (one per pair of children) and a copy of [template 8.1](#)

5. Procedure

- The teacher explains that skeletons are different sizes, and our skeleton grows with us. Also, some bones are longer than others in the same body
- The teacher shows the children the worksheet and explains and demonstrates how to complete the task: In pairs the children have to measure their partner's bones. The teacher should demonstrate how to measure each bone.
- In pairs, children carry out the activity and record their own measurements in the first column on the worksheet.
- Now, we take the whole class to a younger class, e.g. infants, and the children repeat the procedure with a younger child and write the results in the second column.
- Whole class feedback comparing the results and reaching a conclusion about the relative size of bones and whether bones grow.




TEMPLATE 8.1

SKELETON MEASUREMENTS

My name is: My group is:

Today is

 Measure and write

Body Measurements

Part of the Skeleton	Where do I measure?	Measurement in cm.	
		Me	Someone younger
Skull	Top of head to base of head		
Spinal Column	Base of skull to base of spine		
Pelvic Bone	Left hip to right hip		
Humerus	Shoulder to elbow		
Femur	Hip to knee		
Fibula/Tibia	Knee to ankle		

