

## Lesson #16 Paint a Skeleton

Grade Level: 3 – 12



### Description/Objective

Students paint a skeleton with white paint and cotton swabs on black construction paper. Students start to understand how their body moves. Knowing the structure of the bones helps students draw people.

### Time

1 hour

### Materials

Life-size human skeleton (rubber or cardboard) or photos if 3-D skeleton not available

12" x 18" black construction paper (1 per student)

#2 pencils and erasers (1 per student)

Head pattern (several for students to share)

3-1/2" x 5" white index card (several for students to share)

Cotton swabs (3-4 per student)

White tempera paint in small plastic restaurant container (each child gets one)

### Procedure

1. Tell the students you are going to help them draw a skeleton. "I will give you each a 12" x 18" piece of black paper, a head shape and a 3-1/2" x 5" white rectangle. Using your pencil trace the head shape about 2" down from the top of the paper. Leave room for the neck and trace the 3-1/2" x 5" white torso." Demonstrate by drawing on the board or on your piece of paper.
2. Using your pencil, add the shoulders at the top corners of the rectangle.
3. Add the curved collar bone.
4. Draw in the rib cage. Remember that the ribs protect your heart and lungs and only go one half way down your torso.

5. Draw the spine. There are 33 discs from the base of the neck to the tailbone. The hips are large diagonal ovals at the bottom of the rectangle.
6. Have students add the arms. You can have the skeleton's arms doing whatever you decide. The arms are longer than you think. Tap your elbow on your side. The upper arm bone touches the top of your hip bone. Now put your arm above your head. Your elbow is even with the top of the head. Use this measurement as a guide to know where to draw your elbow. Stand up and touch the sides of your thigh with your hands. Notice how far down your hands reach. Draw your arm bones with your pencil. Note that your arm bones can be vertical, horizontal or diagonal.
7. Let's look at our hands. Your hands are approximately as big as your face, from your chin to the middle of your forehead. You need to first draw the shape of your hand and then add the fingers. The shape of your hand looks like a slice of bread. The finger bones are as long as the hand shape. The thumb is a diagonal line at the bottom of the hand shape.
8. Students frequently draw legs short, as if they had only one bone, hip to knee. The distance from the top of the head to the hips is approximately the same distance as from the hips to the toes. The legs will be near the bottom of the construction paper. The top leg bone, or femur, is slightly longer than the bottom of the leg. Decide if you want the legs to stand, dance, or jump. Notice your leg bones can be vertical, horizontal or diagonal.
9. Draw the face on the skull. Make rectangular eye sockets halfway down the skull. Remember, if you make the eyes too high, that means you have no brain. The nose is triangular, and the mouth is halfway between the nose and chin.
10. After you have drawn your skeleton with a pencil, paint all the bones with white tempera using a cotton swab. When painting the skull leave the eyes, nose, and mouth black, but fill in the rest of the skull with white.

### **Subject Matter Integration**

**SCIENCE:** Have students study the internal organs of the body and draw them in a torso using the 3-1/2" x 5" torso card.

**MATH:** Discuss all of the geometric shapes observable in the human skeleton.

### **Variations/Extensions**

1. For younger students, teacher stamps the head and rectangle shape on a piece of black paper and have them paint on the legs and arms with cotton swabs.
2. Draw animal skeletons.