

Forensic Anthropology Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

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- 1. Diaphyseal length in subadults is characterized by what relationship to age and variation?**
 - A. It has a strong relationship with age and little sex or population variation**
 - B. It has a weak relationship with age and high variation by sex**
 - C. It shows no relation to age**
 - D. It is useful only in adults**

- 2. Morton's racial theory linked cranial capacity to race and intelligence; which group did he claim was the smartest?**
 - A. White**
 - B. Black**
 - C. Asian**
 - D. Native American**

- 3. Fusion of most bones' epiphyses occurs between which ages?**
 - A. 5-10**
 - B. 10-25**
 - C. 25-40**
 - D. 40-60**

- 4. Samuel Morton contributed which theory about race?**
 - A. 1779 - 1851 - Polygenism; theory of multiple racial creations, cranial capacity defines race & correlates with intelligence (white smartest, black least), behavioral racial stereotypes**
 - B. 1779 - monogenist with one race**
 - C. 1832 - environmental determinism**
 - D. 1900 - eugenics**

- 5. What is the primary use of forensic stature in investigations?**
 - A. To identify unknown individuals by estimating height from skeletal measurements**
 - B. To determine dietary habits**
 - C. To determine age at death**
 - D. To assign ancestry**

- 6. Which term best describes an anomaly that alters the normal shape or structure of bones?**
- A. Proliferative**
 - B. Deformative**
 - C. Lytic**
 - D. Non-fusion anomalies**
- 7. Forensic stature is best described as what?**
- A. The estimated height of a person based on dental measurements**
 - B. The estimated height of a person based on skeletal measurements**
 - C. The height of a person from age**
 - D. The maximum height of a person**
- 8. What is the MOSAIC project primary aim?**
- A. To standardize autopsy procedures**
 - B. To improve the creation of biological profiles using advanced technology and methods**
 - C. To catalog skeletal remain collections**
 - D. To train forensic artists**
- 9. Which of the following is a type of scientific identification?**
- A. Comparative medical/dental radiography**
 - B. Karyotyping**
 - C. Isotope analysis**
 - D. Toxicology screening**
- 10. Which is a main function of the human skeleton?**
- A. Blood cell production.**
 - B. Hormone regulation.**
 - C. Sensory perception.**
 - D. Antibody synthesis.**

Answers

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1. A
2. A
3. B
4. A
5. A
6. B
7. B
8. B
9. A
10. A

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Explanations

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1. Diaphyseal length in subadults is characterized by what relationship to age and variation?

A. It has a strong relationship with age and little sex or population variation

B. It has a weak relationship with age and high variation by sex

C. It shows no relation to age

D. It is useful only in adults

Growing long bones lengthen in a predictable way as a child ages, so diaphyseal length during subadulthood tracks chronological age very well. Because this growth occurs before puberty, differences due to sex are small and population-based variation is limited, making age the dominant signal. In subadults, the active growth plates drive length increases, whereas sex and population effects become more noticeable only later, after puberty. So the diaphyseal length in subadults provides a strong age relationship with relatively little variation from sex or population.

2. Morton's racial theory linked cranial capacity to race and intelligence; which group did he claim was the smartest?

A. White

B. Black

C. Asian

D. Native American

Morton's approach reflects a period when some scientists tried to justify social hierarchies by tying physical traits to intelligence. He measured skulls to estimate cranial capacity and argued that average brain size varied by race, with the largest averages belonging to White individuals. From that, he concluded they were the most intelligent. This line of thinking was used to promote racial rankings, but it rests on seriously flawed data and methods: biased and non-representative skull samples, measurement practices that can distort results, and the mistaken assumption that cranial capacity directly determines intelligence. Modern science rejects a simple link between brain size and intellect, and recognizes that race is not a precise biological category. So, while Morton concluded that White individuals were the smartest based on cranial capacity, this reflects historical scientific racism rather than valid evidence.

3. Fusion of most bones' epiphyses occurs between which ages?

- A. 5-10
- B. 10-25**
- C. 25-40
- D. 40-60

Epiphyseal fusion marks the end of longitudinal bone growth. The ends of long bones (epiphyses) start as separate centers of ossification and gradually fuse to the main shaft (diaphysis) as maturation occurs. This process happens at different rates for different bones, and it is influenced by sex, nutrition, and health, but the general pattern is that fusion occurs during late childhood into early adulthood. Because most bones fuse within a broad window, the range that best encompasses the timing for the majority of epiphyses is 10 to 25 years. By late teens to early twenties, most epiphyses have fused, with a few bones (such as the clavicle) occasionally fusing a bit later. Therefore, the 10-25 year range is the most representative for when fusion of most bones' epiphyses occurs.

4. Samuel Morton contributed which theory about race?

- A. 1779 - 1851 - Polygenism; theory of multiple racial creations, cranial capacity defines race & correlates with intelligence (white smartest, black least), behavioral racial stereotypes**
- B. 1779 - monogenist with one race
- C. 1832 - environmental determinism
- D. 1900 - eugenics

The idea being tested is how 19th-century theories framed race and used physical measurements to justify hierarchy. Samuel Morton promoted polygenism, the view that distinct races have separate origins and were created independently rather than as variants of a single lineage. He collected skulls and used cranial capacity as a stand-in for intellect, arguing that whites had larger brain sizes on average and thus higher intelligence, with Black individuals at the lower end. This combination—multiple origins plus a supposed link between brain size and worth—was used to defend racial stereotypes and social inequalities. Understanding this helps explain why this option is the best choice: it explicitly names polygenism and the use of cranial capacity to tie race to intelligence and behavior. Modern science rejects these notions; human variation is continuous and not determined by simple brain-size differences, and race is understood as a social construct with limited biological basis.

5. What is the primary use of forensic stature in investigations?

- A. To identify unknown individuals by estimating height from skeletal measurements**
- B. To determine dietary habits**
- C. To determine age at death**
- D. To assign ancestry**

Estimating stature from skeletal measurements is used to help identify unknown individuals by producing an approximate living height that can be compared with missing-person records and other case information. In forensic cases, the lengths of robust long bones—especially the femur, tibia, and humerus—are strongly correlated with overall height, so regression formulas (often population- and sex-specific) convert bone lengths into a height estimate. This height serves as a crucial, objective data point to narrow the pool of possible identities and is then integrated with other lines of evidence. It's not used to infer dietary habits or to determine age at death, which rely on different methods, nor is it the sole basis for assigning ancestry.

6. Which term best describes an anomaly that alters the normal shape or structure of bones?

- A. Proliferative**
- B. Deformative**
- C. Lytic**
- D. Non-fusion anomalies**

Anomaly that changes the bone's shape or contour is best described as deformative. This term specifically captures alterations in morphology—changes in curvature, angulation, or overall contour that deviate from normal anatomy. For example, bowed or twisted bones from growth disturbances or healed deformities illustrate deformative changes in shape rather than new bone mass, destruction, or failed fusion. Proliferative would imply new bone formation or increased growth, which isn't inherently about altering shape in the same way. Lytic denotes bone destruction or resorption, which weakens or breaks down bone rather than simply distorting its form. Non-fusion anomalies refer to failures of bones or sutures to fuse, a developmental issue that is about connectivity rather than broad shape change.

7. Forensic stature is best described as what?

- A. The estimated height of a person based on dental measurements**
- B. The estimated height of a person based on skeletal measurements**
- C. The height of a person from age**
- D. The maximum height of a person**

Stature estimation in forensic anthropology relies on deriving a person's living height from measurements of their bones. The usual method uses the lengths of long bones—such as the femur, tibia, humerus, and radius—and regression equations (often population-specific) to predict overall height. This is why skeletal measurements are the basis for describing stature. Dental measurements aren't reliable indicators of height, and stature isn't about height from age (growth history) or the maximum possible height; it's about the individual's actual height at the time of death, inferred from the skeleton (with soft-tissue adjustments as needed for living height).

8. What is the MOSAIC project primary aim?

- A. To standardize autopsy procedures**
- B. To improve the creation of biological profiles using advanced technology and methods**
- C. To catalog skeletal remain collections**
- D. To train forensic artists**

The MOSAIC project centers on improving how biological profiles are created from skeletal remains by using advanced technology and modern methods. A biological profile combines the characteristics used to describe and identify a person from bones—such as estimated sex, age, ancestry, stature, and notable skeletal features. By integrating innovations like 3D imaging, digital morphometrics, imaging databases, and data-driven analyses, MOSAIC aims to make these assessments more accurate and consistent across cases. This focus on enhancing the creation and reliability of the biological profile is what sets this aim apart from other activities like standardizing autopsy procedures, cataloging skeletal collections, or training forensic artists, which address different aspects of forensic practice.

9. Which of the following is a type of scientific identification?

A. Comparative medical/dental radiography

B. Karyotyping

C. Isotope analysis

D. Toxicology screening

Comparative medical/dental radiography is a type of scientific identification because it directly uses radiographic imaging to establish who someone is by matching antemortem records with postmortem findings. Dental radiographs and other medical images capture unique features such as tooth morphology, restorations, implants, and bone structure that, when they correspond precisely to records from a specific person, provide a reliable, objective link to identity. This method is especially powerful when such radiographs exist before death and can be accurately compared to the decedent's postmortem images. Karyotyping looks at chromosome structure and is used for diagnosing chromosomal disorders, not for identifying an individual. Isotope analysis can reveal geographic origins or dietary information but does not produce a definitive person-to-record match. Toxicology screening identifies chemicals or drugs present in the body and helps interpret cause or context of death, not identity.

10. Which is a main function of the human skeleton?

A. Blood cell production.

B. Hormone regulation.

C. Sensory perception.

D. Antibody synthesis.

The main concept here is that the skeletal system serves as the site of hematopoiesis, the production of blood cells. Inside many bones lies red bone marrow, where hematopoietic stem cells differentiate into the components of blood: red blood cells to carry oxygen, white blood cells to fight infections, and platelets to help with clotting. This function is a fundamental, defining role of the skeleton. Hormone regulation is handled by endocrine glands, not by bones. Sensory perception involves the nervous system and sensory organs, not the skeleton. Antibody synthesis is part of the immune response, produced by immune cells (like plasma cells) that originate from bone marrow, but the antibodies themselves are not a direct function of bone tissue; the main skeletal function among these options is hematopoiesis.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://forensicanthropology.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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