

Vocabulary: Human Evolution - Skull Analysis



Vocabulary

- Bipedal – walking on two legs.
 - The first bipedal *hominins* evolved around 6 million years ago. It is from these hominins that humans eventually *evolved*.
- Canine – a pointed tooth that is used by most animals for grasping and piercing food.
 - Canines are found only in meat-eating animals or animals that evolved from meat-eaters.
- Cranial capacity – the interior volume of the cranium, where the brain is housed.
 - Humans have a cranial capacity of 1,000–2,000 cm³. Chimpanzees have a cranial capacity of 300–400 cm³.
- Cranium – the portion of the *skull* that does not include the mandible (lower jaw).
 - The human cranium is generally composed of 29 different bones.
- Evolve – to change over many generations.
- Foramen magnum – a hole at the base of the skull through which the spinal cord exits.
- Hominid – a member of a group of primates that includes orangutans, gorillas, chimps, and humans.
 - Modern hominids are also known as the great apes.
- Hominin – a member of the evolutionary lineage that led to humans.
 - The ancestors of chimpanzees and hominins split into two separate groups around 6–7 million years ago.
- Index – a ratio of one measurement in relation to another.
 - One common index is the body mass index, which is used to compare a person's height to his or her weight to determine whether he or she is in a healthy weight range.
- Maxilla – the upper jaw.
- Orbit – a hollow in the skull for an eyeball.
- Palate – the roof of the mouth.
- Skull – the bones that make up the head of an animal, including the cranium and mandible (lower jaw).