

Figure 28B. Female skeleton.

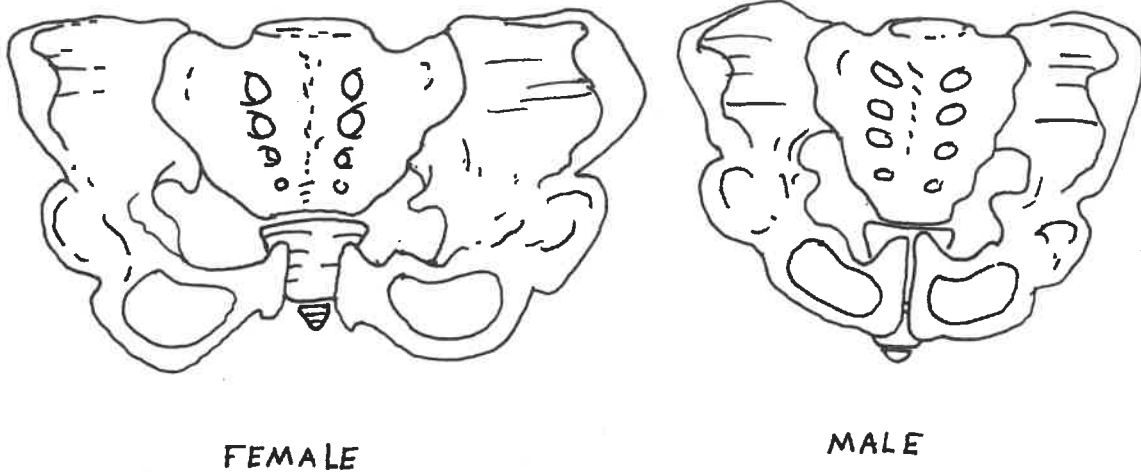


Figure 29. The pelvic girdle of a female is wider than that of a male. The female pubic arch is wider, and the bones are lighter and smoother.

Male or Female?

When examining a skeleton, forensic archaeologists can determine its sex by examining the pelvic girdle and several other factors:

- The female skull is rounder and smaller than the male's. The female forehead is longer vertically, and the jaw is smaller.
- The female sacrum is wider and shorter than the male's.
- In a female, the coccyx (or tail bone) is more moveable than in a male.

Figure 30 shows a sacrum and a coccyx.

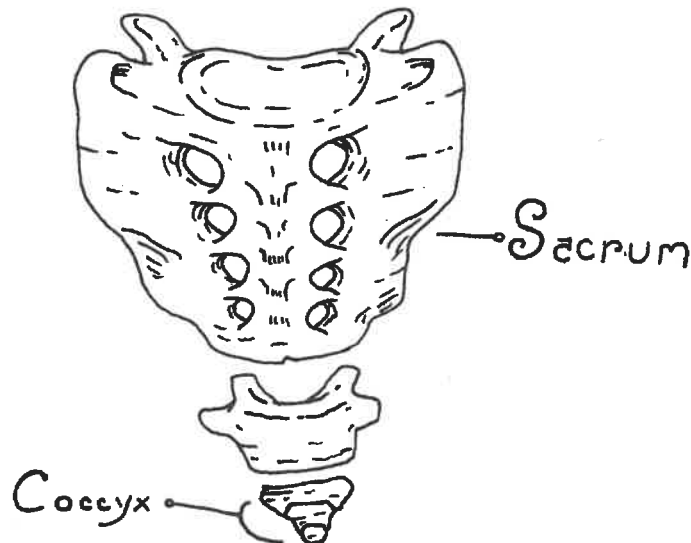


Figure 30. The sacrum and coccyx.

Postlab Questions

1. What is the width of Grandmother's pelvis, measuring from the pelvic brim? How does her pelvis differ from Grandfather's?

2. Examine the arm bones of the two skeletons. Was Grandmother right- or left-handed? How about Grandfather?

3. Which skeleton has more bones: a male skeleton or a female skeleton?

4. How many ribs does Grandfather's skeleton have? Grandmother's?

5. How would you expect the sternal ends of Grandmother's and Grandfather's ribs to look? Why?

6. How can an archaeologist assist a forensic scientist in a criminal investigation?

Skeletal Handout

© 1998 by The Center for Applied Research in Education

