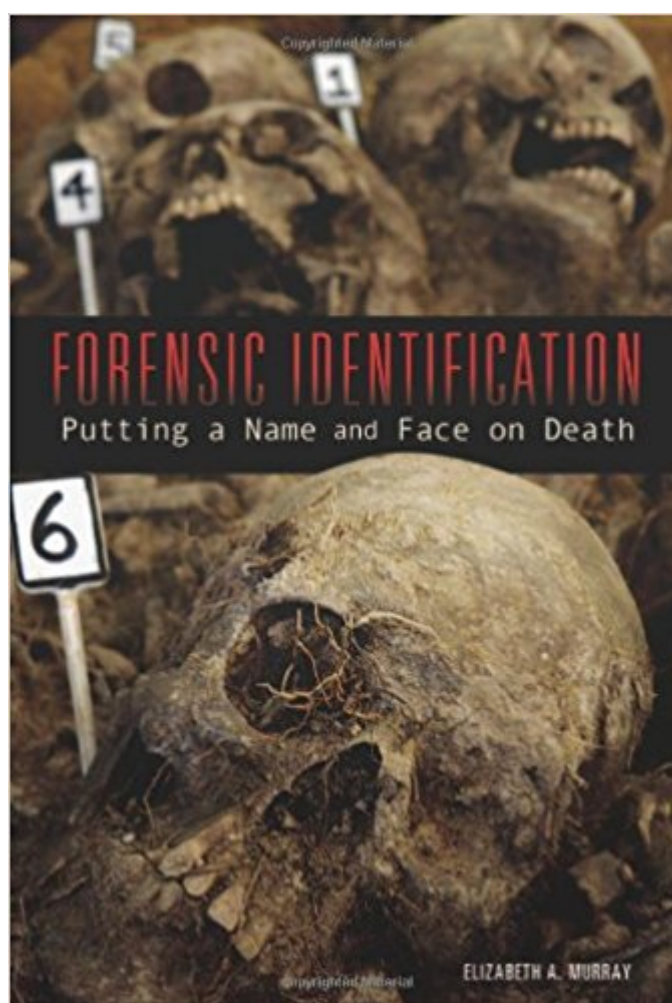


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# Forensic Identification: Putting A Name And Face On Death (Exceptional Science Titles For Upper Grades)



## Synopsis

A small plane crashes into a cornfield and bursts into flames. The three men aboard and their pilot are killed in the inferno. The bodies are burned beyond recognition. Can they be identified? A park ranger uncovers a human torso along a walking path in a nature preserve. The next day, a sanitation worker spots two human legs jutting out of a dumpster. That same afternoon, a man finds the severed head of a young woman along the side of the road. Are these body parts linked? If so, who is the victim? About 4,000 unidentified deceased persons are discovered in the United States every year. But forensic experts are successful in identifying about 3,000 of those bodies within a year. In *Human Identification: Putting a Name and Face on Death*, forensic anthropologist Dr. Elizabeth A. Murray takes readers into the morgues and forensic labs where experts use advanced technology to determine the identities of dead bodies whose names are not known because the bodies are mutilated, decomposed beyond recognition, or cut into pieces. She also explores what happens to the cadavers and remains that belong to people who have been missing for so long that law enforcement and forensic files are no longer active. Through a wide range of fascinating scientific methods—including DNA testing, facial reconstruction, dental records, blood analysis, fingerprinting, and x rays—forensic specialists work to piece together the stories that will give names back to the unknown dead and missing. Come along to watch the experts do their amazing work.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

If one were to judge from the slate of current television shows, it would seem that there is no limit to

this topic's popularity. In a straightforward, no-nonsense manner, this focuses on how forensic scientists are able to solve the mystery of human remains that are not easily identifiable. While the text is detailed, it is contained to four brief chapters. Meanwhile, plenty of illustrative photographs and diagrams lead readers through the minutely detailed techniques that forensic anthropologists, artists, odontologists, and pathologists use, often working with only skeletal remains, to uncover the identities of individuals. Each chapter opens with two real-life, attention-grabbing "case studies," which set the scene before actually delving into the specific steps taken by specialists. The resolutions of the case files at the end of each chapter provide a satisfying wrap-up while demonstrating how the process explained in that chapter is used to solve the case. A smart and interactive introduction to the CSI field. Grades 7-10. --Randall Enos

Dr. Elizabeth Murray has been an educator and a forensic scientist for more than twenty-five years. Her primary teaching focus is human anatomy and physiology and forensic science. She is one of only about seventy anthropologists certified as an expert by the American Board of Forensic Anthropology. Dr. Murray was scientific consultant and on-camera personality for the miniseries *Skeleton Crew* for the National Geographic Channel and a regular cast member on the Discovery Health Channel series *Skeleton Stories*. She has written and delivered a 36-lecture series, *Trails of Evidence: How Forensic Science Works*, produced on DVD by The Teaching Company's *The Great Courses*. Dr. Murray is also the author of *Death: Corpses, Cadavers, and Other Grave Matters* for teen readers.

I bought as a gift for my son and he loved it. He loves science and found the facts very interesting. It did take a long time to get it (Yes, they gave me a 3-week window, but it came on the very last day of that window!) Since it was for my son's birthday I would have liked it much sooner!

It might seem a bit mind-boggling to think that thousands of unidentified people around the world are found dead every year. Sometimes identification is a simple matter, but other times the body is so disfigured by accident or natural disasters that their bodies can be "extremely difficult to identify." Women found under such circumstances have been dubbed Jane Doe, men John Doe (Joe Bloggs in other parts of the globe), and children are labeled Baby Doe. An astonishing "four thousand unidentified deceased persons are discovered every year" in our country, but only a quarter of them are identified within a year. You might ask yourself, how this could possibly happen? In this book you'll find out why and will be able to explore some real case files as you read about how forensic

experts identify these unfortunate people. Some unaccounted for people become missing purposefully, while others may have "met with foul play such as kidnapping murder, and other crimes." If left to the elements, decomposition of the human body can make it even more difficult for forensic medical examiners to identify a person. Take for example, when skeletal remains are discovered, things such as facial features, tattoos, scars, and even fingerprints have been obliterated by time and the elements. Even if "personal effects" are found nearby, they doesn't necessarily contribute to positive identification. There are several reasons positive identification of a person is important, including the fact that authorities need to "create an official death certificate." In the first case file in this book a hunter chanced upon the scattered skeletal remains of someone in a wooded area. You'll be able to walk through the case from the discovery to the scientific inquiry and DNA profile resolution. Not all remains are skeletal and you'll learn identification based on "body surface basics" such as skin color, pigmentation (birthmarks, freckles moles), fingerprints, scars, tattoos, eye and hair color and how they can factor into positive identification. You'll also learn about identifying skeletal features, forensic dentists, "durable goods," artistic reconstruction using the skull, the role of digital imagery and "computerized age progression," isotope testing, DNA analysis, and you'll learn many more fascinating facts about forensic identification. This is a scientific look at how forensic investigators are able to discover the identities unknown and missing persons. This is definitely not a book for the squeamish as there are graphic photographs in these pages. The science is solid and the research Dr. Elizabeth A. Murray, a forensic anthropologist, lends to this work is impeccable. The young reader is led through the forensic identification process of missing and unknown people, including those who are "mutilated, decomposed beyond recognition, or cut into pieces." Actual case files, introduced in brief sidebars, are interspersed throughout the book. After a brief look at the case, questions are thrown out to make us think as we read further. The conclusion of the case is later discussed. In the back of the book is an index, a selected bibliography, and additional recommended book and website information to explore. This book courtesy of the publisher.

Nice and valuable. send it to my teacher as a gift, Very nice product - sharp, good weight, looks great. OK, there is do not have any problem. i will purchase it from you next time.

Review originally featured on Bookluvrs Haven blog. Alright, so to be fair, when I requested this book I didn't realize it was a science title meant for higher grades. I thought it was for adults. After all, it speaks of forensic science and suspicious death. But it is in fact an introductory sort of book about

forensics. Like a Forensics 101 book. Though the subject matter was interesting, I was pretty bored some of the time. Since I have a College degree in Police Studies, I was familiar with a lot that was meticulously described in these pages. I did skim a lot of the dry information (dry for me anyways) and focused more on the case studies in this book. Not to mention some pretty graphic pics that were interesting to me, and hopefully not too graphic for kids, though I am not sure if "higher grades" means highschool age? In any case, the case studies earned the 3 star, because they kept me interested in reading this to the end. Very cool book though if you want to know a lot more about forensic sciences, and it is written quite well, with plenty of visual illustrations to keep you focused.\*I received a eBook copy of this book for free to review from the author/publisher; this in no way influenced my review, all opinions are 100% honest and my own.\*

An excellent book to cultivate the young mind. Great illustration and detailed step by step narratives of various case studies. I highly recommend this book for anyone teaching a class that includes forensics. Also great for any student curious about study in the world of forensic identification! Todd MatthewsDoeNetwork.org NamUs @ UNTHSC

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