

Part A.

If you spend even a small amount of time researching the controversy regarding whether or not modern populations are the genetic descendants of Neanderthals, you'll quickly learn how contentious this idea remains. There is a fascinating side note to recent research (based on comparative genetic investigation of the human genome and the Neanderthal genome) that suggests Neanderthal had full language and speech capability – an enormous change from the time when I was a student and this was a hotly debated topic at professional meetings. The crux of the argument about the relationship of Neanderthals to modern humans boils down to these two questions:

(1) Were Neanderthals an evolutionary side branch gone extinct without significant contribution to modern gene pools?

(2) Were Neanderthals an immediate ancestor of modern people who interbred with emerging Homo sapien populations?

The richest human fossil and archaeological records are in Europe and western Asia, so we know more about Neanderthal morphology and behavior than any other archaic human population. Our current interpretation of Late Pleistocene fossil and archaeological evidence is conditioned by the long history of (good and bad) research on the subject of early humans. Our view of Neanderthals has changed considerably since their initial discovery. Check out these sites for a quick look at some interesting ideas about Homo neanderthalensis:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/evolution/neanderthals-us.html>

[\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

[Links to an external site.](#)

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/8660940.stm>

[\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

[Links to an external site.](#)

<http://archaeology.about.com/od/neanderthals/fr/Decoding-Neanderthals.htm>

[\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

[Links to an external site.](#)

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2010/05/100506-science-neanderthals-humans-mated-interbred-dna-gene/>

[\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

TASK:

- 1 Read this one-page information sheet about forensic facial reconstruction.**
(links on the left to learn more) http://www.anthropology.si.edu/writteninbone/facial_reconstruction.html [\(Links to an external site.\)](#)
[Links to an external site.](#)
- 2 Browse this list of websites that feature Neanderthal facial reconstructions by reputable and knowledgeable experts. (5 points)**
- 3** <http://peabody.yale.edu/exhibits/fossil-fragments/fossils/neanderthal-reconstruction> [\(Links to an external site.\)](#)
[Links to an external site.](#)
- 4** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-19960748>
[\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

[Links to an external site.](#)

http://newswatch.nationalgeographic.com/2008/09/17/neanderthal_woman_is_first_rep/ (Links to an external site.)

[Links to an external site.](#)

- 5 <http://www.daynes.com/en/reconstructions/neanderthal,2.php>
(Links to an external site.)

[Links to an external site.](#)

<http://arc-team-open-research.blogspot.com/2012/08/facial-reconstruction-of-neanderthal.html> (Links to an external site.)

[Links to an external site.](#)

- 6 **Visit the following website and write a brief report on research that strikes you as interesting - it must be about Neanderthals.**

<http://www.pnas.org/search?>

[submit=yes&y=0&fulltext=Neanderthal&x=0&format=standard&hits=80&sortspec=relevance&submit=Go](http://www.pnas.org/search?submit=yes&y=0&fulltext=Neanderthal&x=0&format=standard&hits=80&sortspec=relevance&submit=Go) (Links to an external site.)

[Links to an external site.](#)

- 7 **Your post should be a minimum of 100+ words - please cite any resources used.**