



**Ffor your students.**

# Forensic Autopsy Cadaver Demonstration Vocabulary

**Autopsy** – from the Greek “to see for one’s self”. It is a postmortem assessment that consists of a thorough examination of a body to determine the cause and manner of death to evaluate any disease or injury that may be present.

**Forensics** – pertains to legal matters and incorporates the science of pathology and death scene analysis, to determine a cause of death.

**Liver mortis** (hypostasis) – process by which blood settles to the dependent portions of the body, causing a deep purple discoloration of the skin. Occurs within 2-4 hours and becomes “fixed” within 8-12 hours.

**Rigor mortis** – muscular rigidity which develops in a cadaver, usually from 4-10 hours after death and lasts 3-4 days.

**Algor mortis** – term used to describe the cooling of the body after death. Will vary depending on the multiple factors, including original body temperature, ambient temperature, clothing, and environmental conditions on site.

**Putrefaction** – the state of body decomposition.

**Bloating** – accumulation of gases under the skin, due to formation of gases by bacterial action and putrefaction of the internal tissues of the abdomen and the inside of the intestines.

**Marbling** – a characteristic of postmortem decomposition, as hemolyzed blood within the superficial veins mixes with hydrogen sulfide and turns a black color. Reveals a weblike pattern of blood vessels in the face, chest, abdomen, and extremities.

**Exsanguination** – extensive loss of blood due to internal or external hemorrhage.

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**Medical Examiner (ME)** – a physician, licensed to practice medicine, usually trained in pathology, particularly forensic pathology.

**Death Certificate** – a legal document signed by a physician or other designated authority, that identifies the deceased, as well as declares the cause, date, time, and location of death.

**Entomology** – a branch of Zoology, that deals with the scientific study of insects. The forensic entomologist uses knowledge of the life cycles of flies and various other insects that feed on corpses to determine the approximate time of death, as well as to determine whether a body has been moved from one location to another.

**Anthropology** – a study of the origin and behavior of humans, as well as the physical, social, and cultural development of humans. The forensic anthropologist studies human skeletal remains to determine the age, sex, and race of the deceased, identify any illness or injury that he or she may have suffered, and to establish time of death. Also involved extensively in identifying victims of mass disasters and those interred in mass graves.

**Odontology** – the branch of medicine dealing with the anatomy, development, and diseases of the teeth. A forensic odontologist helps to identify unknown corpses by matching dental patterns with previous X-rays, dental casts, or photographs. They may also be called upon to match a suspects teeth with bite marks on a victim, or another pertinent object.

**Serology** – the branch of science that deals with the measurement and characterization of antibodies, antigens, and other immunological substances in body fluids (serum). The serologist conducts blood typing, paternity testing, and DNA profiling.

**Toxicology** – the study of drugs and poisons. The forensic toxicologist can determine whether drugs or poisons are present in the living or the deceased, in order to determine if those substances contributes to injury or death. Toxicologists also conduct test to determine alcohol intoxication or drug abuse.

**Botany** – the scientific study of plant life. The forensic botanist may examine plant fragments, pollen, and soil to determine if a body has been moved, or if a suspect was at a particular crime scene.

**Pathology** – the scientific study of the nature of disease and its causes, processes, development, and consequences. The forensic pathologist is a licenses physician with specialty training in pathology, as well as subspecialty training in forensic pathology. The forensic pathologist is in charge of the body and all evidence that is obtained from its examination.

**AIMS**  
**“Forensic Autopsy Cadaver Demonstration”**  
**Pre/Post Test**

1. This is an abnormal condition described as an accumulation of air in the chest cavity.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ of death is described as the disease process or injury responsible for initiating the train of events, brief or prolonged, which produces the fatal end result.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is the scientific study of the nature of disease and its causes, processes, development, and consequences.
4. Under normal circumstances, the first part of the body to develop rigor is the area around the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. A bone in the neck that is frequently broken with strangulation is the \_\_\_\_\_ bone.
6. Name the five “Manners of Death” as they are normally classified: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_
7. Liver Mortis, or the lividity that appears post-mortem, will usually become “fixed” in \_\_\_\_\_ hours.
8. The longer the post-mortem interval, the \_\_\_\_\_ precise the estimate of time of death.
9. Entomology is the scientific study of \_\_\_\_\_.
10. There are multiple factors that can affect the rate of cooling of a body post-mortem. Name three of them: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_
11. What type of bag is used to “bag” hands, and/or feet at a crime scene? \_\_\_\_\_
12. The autopsy of the body is just one part of the death investigation. Name the other two parts of the so-called “diagnostic triangle”. \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

**AIMS**  
**Forensic Autopsy Cadaver Demonstration**  
**Pre/Post Test**  
**Answer Sheet**

1. pneumothorax
2. cause
3. pathology
4. face and neck
5. hyoid
6. natural / accidental / homicide / suicide / undetermined
7. 8-12
8. less
9. insects
10. ambient temperature, clothed vs. unclothed, weight of deceased, exposure of body to wind/breeze, temperature of body prior to death, exposed surface area
11. paper
12. history & scene