

Was Lucy Our Ancestor? (Grades 6-8)

Students in public schools are often taught that humans evolved from ape-like creatures over millions of years. One of the most popular is *Australopithecus afarensis* (aka Lucy). Was Lucy really our ancestor? Let's take a closer look at the fossil evidence.

Some facts about *Australopithecus afarensis*:

- Name means "southern ape"
- First discovered by Donald Johansen in 1974 in Ethiopia, Africa
- Was nicknamed "Lucy" after a Beatles' song
- Original find was only 40% of complete skeleton; was missing major parts of the skull, hands and feet
- More fossilized bones, including hands and feet, have now been found from other sites

What we have been told:

- Scientists agree: Lucy is our ancestor
- She lived 4-5 million years ago
- Lucy walked upright
- Scientists have proof that Lucy was our ancestor

What you won't be told:

- All scientists do NOT agree that Lucy is our ancestor
- Fossil evidence suggests she was just an extinct ape
- Statues like the one shown here and some evolutionary videos are very misleading!

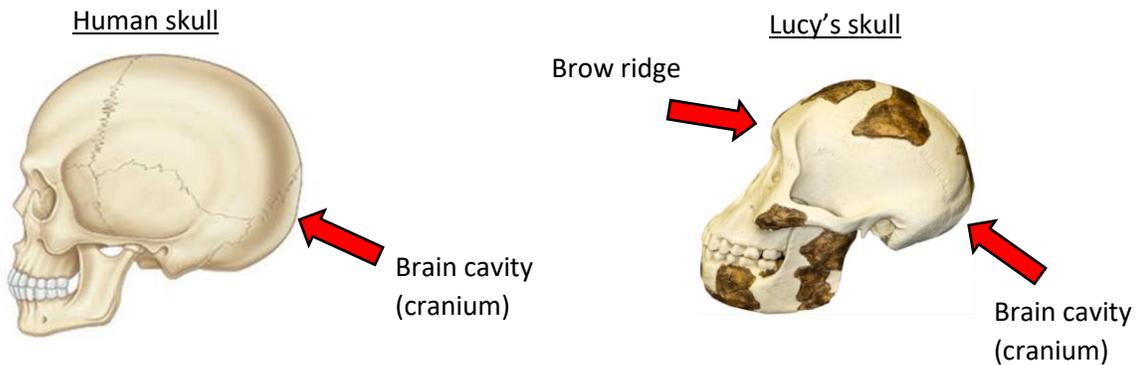


credit: Dr. David Menton
Answers in Genesis

What did Lucy really look like? Let's look at the fossil evidence.

Lucy's Skull

The skull shown on the left is a human skull and the one on the right side is a model of Lucy's skull. Look closely at these pictures and write down 2-3 differences. Obviously, Lucy's skull is very different than ours!



Differences

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Compare the three skulls shown below. Question: does Lucy's skull look more like a human skull or an ape (Bonobo) skull?



Answers: (1) The face of Lucy's skull is sloped (2) Lucy's skull has a big brow ridge (3) human skull has a bigger brain

Lucy's Hands & Fingers

Have you ever seen an ape swinging from a rope or a tree limb? They are really good at it because God designed apes with long, curved hands and fingers.

Although statues of Lucy in museums often show her with very humanlike hands, scientists who have studied Australopithecine fossils (Lucy's kind) have determined that Lucy had long, curved fingers and hands. They said that Lucy's hands were:

"...surprisingly similar to hands found on the small end of the pigmy chimpanzee to common chimpanzee range."

Source: Jack Stern & Randall L. Susman, 1983 American Journal of Physical Anthropology 60:279-317 p 284



Australopithecine finger fossil

Lucy's Wrists

Have you ever seen an ape walk on its knuckles? It's amazing how fast they can go! Apes are really good at it because they have wrist bones that can lock into place for knuckle-walking. What kind of wrist bones does Lucy have? Fact: Lucy's wrists could lock into place for knuckle-walking:

"A. Anamensis and A. Afarensis, the latter represented by the famous skeleton known as Lucy, had wrists capable of locking the hands in place during knuckle-walking,"

Source: Science News April 8, 2000 P 235 "Lucy on the Ground with Knuckles". Richmond and Strait, Nature March 23, 2000.

Here is something to think about: if Lucy walked upright like we do then why does she have long, curved hands and fingers? Why does she have wrist bones that lock into place for knuckle-walking? Some evolutionists say that Lucy was in the process of learning to walk and hadn't fully evolved yet. Quite frankly, answers like that are simply attempts to explain away what the fossil evidence clearly shows—Lucy spent most of her time in trees and knuckle-walking.

Lucy's Feet & Toes

The feet on this statue of Lucy look like human feet but is that what the fossils show? Once again, scientists who have studied Australopithecine fossils came to a much different conclusion:

“From skeletons of Lucy’s kind that have been found with some foot bones, we can make a better guess that Lucy’s feet had toes that could grab things and allow her to be a good climber. She did not have human feet.” Ruth Carter, Answers in Genesis



Credit: Dr. David Menton, Answers in Genesis

Source: Ruth Carter,
<https://answersingenesis.org/kids/answers/online-books/really-really-really-learn-about-apemen/lucy-australopithecus-afarensis/>

Lucy's Pelvic Bones

As mentioned earlier, apes have special wrist bones that enable them to knuckle-walk. They can however, walk on two legs for short periods of time. But apes walk very differently than we do because their pelvic and hip bones are very different than ours. What about Lucy? Scientists who have studied the fossils said that Lucy’s pelvic bones are similar to chimpanzees:

“The fact that the anterior portion of the iliac blade faces laterally in humans but not in chimpanzees is obvious. The marked resemblance of AL 288-1 [Lucy] to the chimpanzee is equally obvious”

Source: J. T. Stern and R. L. Susman, American Journal of Physical Anthropology, 80:279, 1983.

The fact that Lucy’s pelvic bones were similar to a chimpanzee is a big problem for evolutionists because she couldn’t have possibly walked upright like we do. Because of this, Dr. Owen Lovejoy attempted to solve this problem by reworking the fossils to make them look more human. However, several scientists including other evolutionists, think Dr. Lovejoy went too far in his reconstruction.

The Real Lucy

The fossil evidence shows that Lucy was not our ancestor—she was an extinct ape. After watching the video, fill in the missing words below:

1. Skull: _____ and _____
2. Hands & fingers: _____ and ape-like. Designed for _____ from limbs.
3. Wrist bones: could _____ into place for knuckle-walking – same as apes today!
4. Toes: Lucy’s toes were _____ and _____
5. Pelvic bones: badly smashed but “remarkably similar to a _____”

Recommended Resources

- Lucy—She’s No Lady (DVD) available from Answers in Genesis
- Three Ways to Make an Ape Man (DVD) available from Answers in Genesis
- Contested Bones (Book) available from Creation Ministries International
- Lucy Exposed (DVD) available from David Reeves Ministries
- Lucy (book) available from Genesis Apologetics
- Genesis Apologetics Mobile App (Free)