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The American Museum of Natural History, in New York City, maintains this composite Neanderthal skeleton. The photo, by Claire Houck, is available via this license: [CC BY-SA 2.0](#).

During August of 1856, workers in a German limestone quarry near Düsseldorf made an interesting discovery. They found what appeared to be bones. Had they belonged to a bear? Were they ancient? Human? Something modern man had never previously seen?

Unknown to those Neander Valley workers, similar discoveries - of skulls - had been made in Engis, Belgium (in 1829) and Forbes' Quarry, Gibraltar (in 1848). The workers gave their findings to Johann Karl Fuhlrott, an amateur naturalist, who sought the assistance of anatomist Hermann Schaafhausen.

By 1856, Fuhlrott gave the quarry remains a name: *Homo neanderthalensis* (Neanderthal Man). Ever since, scholars have debated all things Neanderthal: Who they were; how they lived; why they died out.

In the succeeding years, the remains of more than four hundred Neanderthals have been found in various places. Let's take a look at some of them:

- The Neander Valley findings - referred to as Neanderthal 1 - included a skull cap, two femora, three right-arm bones, two left-arm bones, a section of the left ilium, pieces of a scapula and some ribs.
- Excavated skulls were unusual. They seemed human, but with strange features as these drawings (comparing *Homo sapiens*, on the left, and *Homo neanderthalensis*, on the right) reflect.
- As remains were discovered in various places, it seemed clear that the owners of these skulls and skeletons had once lived across Europe. Then, they disappeared. No one is sure why.

With bits and pieces of remains, found in disparate places, scholars could not effectively study the Neanderthals. They needed to use casts of partial skeletons to create an entire composite.

Gary Sawyer, a reconstruction expert at New York City's American Museum of Natural History, realized what had to be done. He used whatever was available, and rebuilt broken parts, to create one composite: A five-foot, four-inch (1.65 meter) Neanderthal Man. It is the basis for the museum's Neanderthal hunter.

Is it possible to compare Neanderthals with humans by looking at more than just skulls and skeletons?

Detailed studies are available on-line, thanks to the University of Zurich. DNA, and the use of other modern

technology, has allowed experts to transform fossilized remains into reconstructed faces.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/MEET-the-NEANDERTHALS-Night-at-the-Museum>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/MEET-the-NEANDERTHALS-Night-at-the-Museum>

## Media Stream



### Limestone Quarry

Image online, courtesy the newpos.org [website](#).

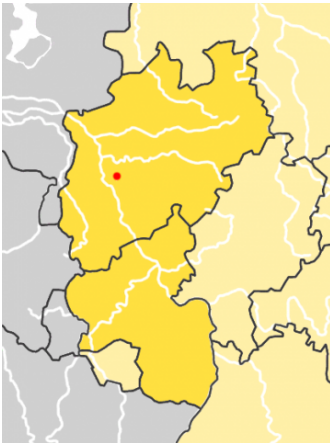
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### Dusseldorf - Map Locator

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### Neander Valley - Map Locator

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### Johann Karl Fuhlrott

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

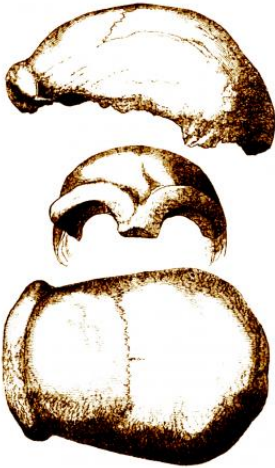
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### Hermann Schaafhausen

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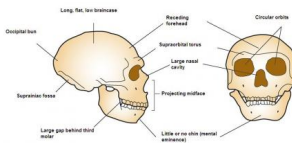


### Neanderthal 1 - Items Found

Image, described above, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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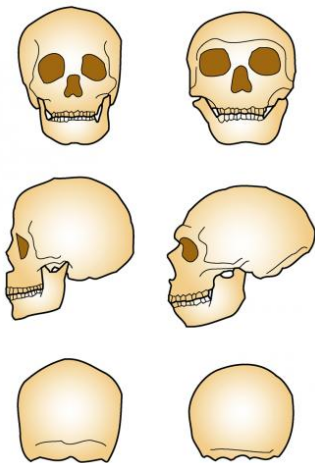
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### Neanderthal - Strange Features Detail

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### Comparison Drawings

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### Neanderthal Range - Map

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### Gary Sawyer

Image online, courtesy the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

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### Neanderthal - Composite

Image online, courtesy the American Museum of Natural History, Division of Anthropology [website](#).

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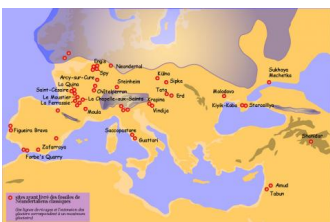


### Neanderthal Hunter - American Museum of Natural History

Image online, courtesy the American Museum of Natural History.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Neanderthal-Hunter-American-Museum-of-Natural-History>



### Neanderthals - Locator Map

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## MEET the NEANDERTHALS

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