

Anatomical Features – Skulls

Below is a list of anatomical features associated with the skull. We will be using these terms throughout the remainder of the semester when referring to primate human and non-human skulls. Please familiarize yourself with these features and their proper anatomical names. Visuals of these features on the opposite side of this sheet.

foramen magnum – hole at the base of the skull through which the spinal cord runs and attaches the skull to spine; helps determine mode of locomotion (if centered at base of skull, good indication that organism is bipedal; if positioned toward the back of the skull, good indication that organism is quadrupedal)

sagittal crest – raised, bony ridge along the top center of the skull; used for anchoring chewing muscles and usually found in animals that have a large jaw

facial prognathism – jutting out of the face, particularly lower face, jaw region

zygomatic arches – triangular bones on either side of the face below the eyes; cheek bones

mandible – the bone forming the lower jaw

maxillae – paired bones uniting to form the upper jawbone

supra-orbital ridge – bony ridge above the eyes (brow ridges)

post-orbital bar – bony structure surrounding the eye socket; may fully or partially enclose the eye socket

post-orbital plate – bony plate at the back of the eye socket

frontal bone – forms the forehead

occipital bone – a single trapezoid-shaped bone situated at the posterior (back) and inferior (lower) part of the cranium

dental formula – amount and type of teeth an organism possesses (# of canines, # of incisors, # of premolars, # of molars)

dental comb - lower canine & incisor teeth compressed tightly together to form a dental structure used in grooming (like a comb).

dental comb



