

Sabina Trumble
Cabrillo College, Aptos, CA
Hartnell College, Salinas, CA
sabinatrumble@yahoo.com

FILM WORKSHEET

The Great Piltdown Forgery

Name: _____

The Piltdown man, also known as “the earliest Englishman,” was one of the greatest hoaxes in science. The forgery lasted 40 years, and a scientific fraud like it was never seen before or since. But who committed the forgery?

1. When was Piltdown man presented to the world?
2. What was the initial response of the science community to Piltdown man?
3. What object was initially found at the Piltdown site?
4. Who found it?
5. Who was Charles Dawson?
6. Why might Dawson have wanted to be associated with Sir Arthur Smith Woodward?
7. What remains did he and Dawson find at Piltdown?
8. Why might Woodward have been considered a suspect?
9. What was the significance of the canine tooth that was found?
10. What items were revealed to be forged?
11. What is the evidence for Dawson’s involvement?

12. Could the Piltdown hoax happen today? Why or why not?

13. What might compel scientists today to be involved with or taken in by a hoax?

14. Contrast the evidence for Piltdown man and that for another startling find, the hominid "Lucy," which was discovered in 1974. What evidence supports Lucy's authenticity and evaluate that evidence against the evidence supporting Piltdown man's veracity. How do they compare?

15. In the time line of humans, where was Piltdown man supposed to fit in?