

Forensic Science Word Study

Chapter 11 – DEATH: MEANING, MANNER, MECHANISM, CAUSE, AND TIME

Directions: Study the following words by reading and rereading them each evening so you will be prepared for the word study test each week. You may use one index card to write as many words and definitions on as possible to use for the test. The card must be written in ink, be in your handwriting, and have your *name*, your class *period*, and the *chapter* recorded in the top, right corner with no obvious erasures or mark outs. **ALL WORDS MUST BE NUMBERED.** If all the criteria are met, you may use your index card during the test. It will then be stapled to your test.

- 1.) **Algor mortis** – the cooling of the body after death or death heat
- 2.) **Autolysis** – the spontaneous breakdown as they self-digest
- 3.) **Cause of death** – the immediate reason for a person's death (such as heart attack, kidney failure, etc.)
- 4.) **Death** – the cessation, or end, of life
- 5.) **Decomposition** – the process of rotting and breaking down
- 6.) **Desecrating a corpse** – a new, federal law which makes desecrating a corpse a federal offense; called the Jennifer Cave Act and based on the case where a 21-year old girl was shot, stabbed, and partially dismembered by an accessory to the murder who was trying to help the murderer conceal the crime
- 7.) **Forensic entomology** – the study of insects as they pertain to legal issues as evidence in an investigation; Forensic Entomology is the use of the insects, and their arthropod relatives that inhabit decomposing remains to aid legal investigations. The broad field of forensic entomology is commonly broken down into three general areas: medicolegal, urban, and stored product pests. The medicolegal section focuses on the criminal component of the legal system and deals with the necrophagous (or carrion) feeding insects that typically infest human remains.
- 8.) **Instar** – one of the three larval stages
- 9.) **Larva** (plural **larvae**) - immature form of an animal that undergoes metamorphosis or a change from egg to adult/Examples attracted by decomposition include the blowflies, wasps, cheese skippers, mites, and beetles
- 10.) **Lividity** - the pooling of blood in the body which can help reveal if the body has been moved; a purple coloration of dependent parts, except in areas of contact pressure, appearing within 30 minutes to 2 hours after death, as a result of gravitational movement of blood within the vessels
- 11.) **Livor mortis** – the pooling of the blood in tissues after death resulting in a reddish color to the skin or the death color of the body
- 12.) **Manner of death** – one of four means by which someone dies (i.e., natural, accidental, suicidal, homicidal, undetermined)
- 13.) **Mechanism of death** – the specific body failure that leads to death
- 14.) **Pupa** (plural **pupae**) – the stage in an insect's life cycle when the larva forms a capsule around itself and changes into its adult form
- 15.) **Rigor mortis** – the stiffening of the skeletal muscles after death or death stiffness; the stiffening of the body after death because of a loss of Adenosine Triphosphate (ATP) from the body's muscles. ATP is the substance that allows energy to flow to the muscles and help them work and without this the muscles become stiff and inflexible. Factors affecting rigor mortis include ambient temperature, body's weight, type of clothing, illness, level of physical activity shortly before death, sun exposure