

Name:

Class:

Teacher:

CSI: ALAMEDA – CASE #07DCMedReaBD





A dead body has been found in the village of Ampthill. He has already been identified as Thomas, the wool merchant. It seems mysterious as there is no obvious reason for his death. The forensic team are examining his body, but they have not found many clues. There seems to be some sort of swelling under his armpits and there is a distinct smell of almonds in the air around the body. There is a small tube that seems to be the source of the smell. It is over to you to solve the mystery – you can look at the evidence in any order to try to piece together a hypothesis.

Reconstruct His Last Movements

After leaving the apothecary Thomas passed the priest who commented that he was looking unwell. The priest suggested that Thomas whip himself to repent for the sins he had committed.	He complained to his wife that he felt ill and had a headache, so she sent him to get some medicine from the apothecary.
Thomas drank the medicine that he was given. One of his sons said Thomas had commented that it smelt of almonds.	Thomas was found dead.
Thomas' wife noticed how feverish he felt when they were in bed and went to sleep somewhere else.	Thomas met on his way to the apothecary a woman known throughout the town for her medical knowledge. She suggested that he cut up a pigeon and rubbed it all over his body to cure his illness.
Thomas argued with his wife because he had not been able to sell the wool he had taken to London for a good price. Instead, he had traded some of it for other goods.	On the way to buy some medicine, Thomas bumped into a farmer he had bought some wool from last week. They appeared to argue as the farmer accused Thomas of owing his money.
When Thomas undressed for bed his wife noticed some swellings underneath his armpits. The swellings were beginning to turn black.	The apothecary sold Thomas a potion containing arsenic.
Thomas returned from a trip to London, where he had been trading wool with merchants from Europe.	He unloaded some of the wool that he had not sold. As it was unpacked, his wife noticed several fleas amongst the wool.
Thomas' sons helped him to unload the wagon. One of them was complaining that something had bitten him.	Thomas told his family that the air in London had been unpleasant and full of vapours.

Reconstruct His Last Movements



The body has already been identified as Thomas, the local wool merchant. Other investigators have already interviewed several other people in the manor of Ampthill – but the order of events is confusing. Can you place the events of his last 24 hours in order?



Evaluate The Physical Evidence

You need to examine the body to look for evidence of a cause of death. Record your findings below.

1) Is there anything about the position of the body or its surroundings that make you suspicious?

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2) Are there any objects around the body that might give you useful clues about its death?

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3) Look at the body itself. Is there anything unusual about it?

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4) Using the bubo task from last week, is there any further information that you can find about the condition of the body?

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5) Are there any other comments that you feel might be important to add?

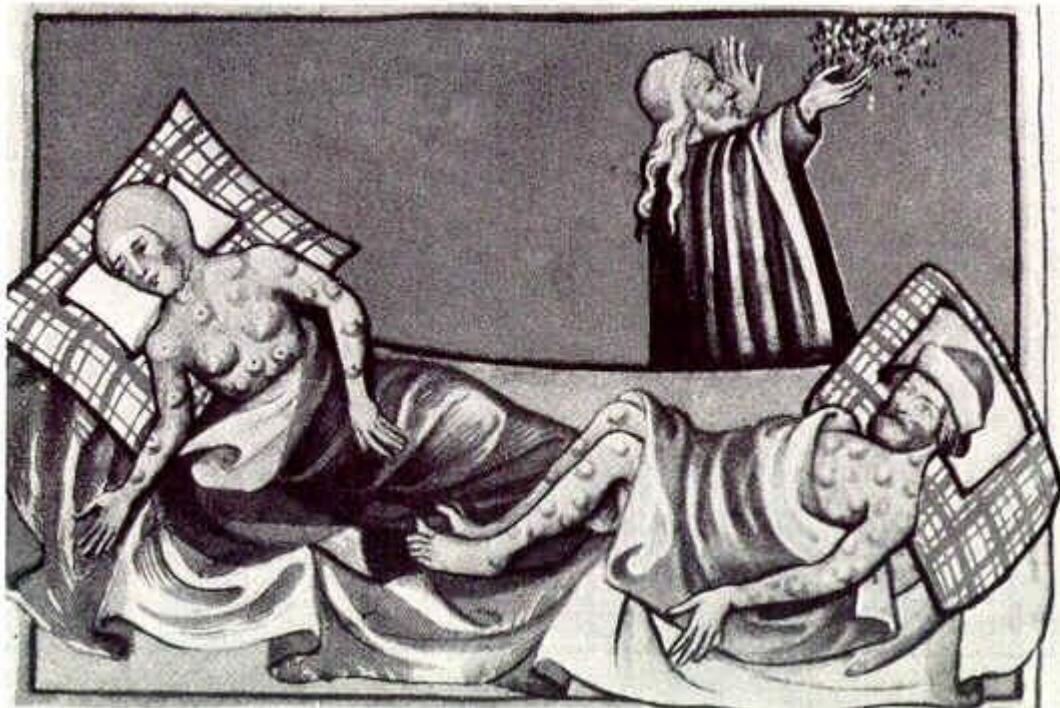
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Analyse The Evidence

Use this piece of evidence to inform your investigation.



An image of the Black Death from the Toggenburg Bible (1411)

- 1) Make notes around the source describing what you can see.
- 2) What do you think is wrong with the people in the bed?

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- 3) What is the man in the background doing?

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- 4) How could this link to the dead body in the room? Explain your ideas.

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Analyse The Evidence

Use this piece of evidence to inform your investigation.

"The symptoms were not the same as in the East, where a gush of blood from the nose was the plain sign of inevitable death; but it began both in men and women with certain swellings in the groin or under the armpit. They grew to the size of a small apple or an egg, more or less, and were vulgarly called tumours. In a short space of time these tumours spread from the two parts named all over the body. Soon after this the symptoms changed and black or purple spots appeared on the arms or thighs or any other part of the body, sometimes a few large ones, sometimes many little ones. These spots were a certain sign of death, just as the original tumour had been and still remained."

An extract from the Decameron by Giovanni Boccaccio (1348)

1) Highlight or underline any key phrases or terms that you see in the text.

2) How could this source help in your investigation?

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3) How useful is this source?

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4) Are there any problems with the reliability of this source?

Explain why you might not trust the source.

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Analyse The Evidence

Use this piece of evidence to inform your investigation.

“Less disturbing, if equally useless, were the numerous plague ‘cures’. Strapping live chickens around plague buboes or drinking potions laced with mercury, arsenic or ground horn from the mythical unicorn did not help. Nor did carrying sweet-smelling flowers and herbs or ornate pomanders to purify the air. But amid the chaos, the pandemic prompted more useful responses - early public health measures to be expanded and then refined in the coming decades. For the Black Death should not be seen in isolation. It was the main event, a big bang. But it was also the herald for waves of lesser plague outbreaks that appeared regularly until well into the 1700s.”

<http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/broughttolife/themes/publichealth/blackdeath> (2016)

1) What type of source is this?

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2) What potential issues are there with using this type of source?

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3) Summarise what the source tells us about medieval medicine?

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4) Why were people unable to cure the Black Death?

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Hypothesize What Happened

You have spent time gathering evidence and now it is time for you to make a decision on the cause of the mysterious death of Thomas. Complete this sheet, **then** record what you think.

I think Thomas died from.....

My reasons for this hypothesis are

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2).....
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3).....
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Other people might think

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