

## Great minds grow alike? Skulls of Neanderthals, modern humans show remarkable similarities

Evidence from Neanderthals' skulls suggests that their large brains grew in the same way as ours do. That in turn suggests that Neanderthals were perhaps not so cognitively different from us – although not everyone agrees with this interpretation.

We know that [Neanderthal brains were roughly the same size as ours](#), making them the largest among all known extinct human species. To get a sense for how they grew over an individual's life, Christoph Zollikofer at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, and his colleagues looked at 15 Neanderthal skulls. Six belonged to adults and nine to children; the youngest was an individual who died just weeks after birth, the oldest a child who died aged roughly 12.

Using software, they generated 3D casts of the brain case – effectively allowing them to study changes in the rough shape of the Neanderthal brain through childhood. They then compared the findings with patterns of brain development in modern children.

The team found evidence that at birth, Neanderthal brains were subtly but significantly longer, wider and flatter than modern human brains. Subsequently, though, the Neanderthal brain developed rather like ours: certain regions, including the cerebellum, expanded quickly during childhood and then became some of the slowest-growing areas in early adulthood.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Neanderthal skulls and brains may have developed just like ours](#)**