

Solution: *Skeleton Boogey Music*

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This puzzle was inspired by the Skeleton Dance from Monkey Island 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMkSA7V1qFE> It consists of 19 drawings of skeletons which have been disconnected and rearranged in various ways, plus 14 “verses” of clues. The format of the clues is a play on the popular version of the song Dem Bones, whose lyrics read something like this:

The head bone’s connected to the neck bone
The neck bone’s connected to the shoulder bone...

and which Guybrush’s dead parents sing to him in the video above.

In each verse of the song, we’ve replaced the name of the bone with a crossword clue. For example, the first line of the puzzle reads:

The [to grow food] bone’s connected to the [flower child] bone.

“to grow food” is to “farm” and a “flower child” is a “hippie”. As you solve more of the clues, you may notice that they contain some familiar sets of letters. Specifically, each clue leads to a word which contains one of the following strings: “head”, “hip”, “arm”, “leg”, “rib”. So, the first verse of the song can be translated as:

The [fARM] bone’s connected to the [HIPpie] bone
The [fARM] bone’s connected to the [RIBosome] bone
The [HEADlines] bone’s connected to the [teLEGraph] bone
The [HEADlines] bone’s connected to the [RIBosome] bone.

If you look at the skeletons on the first page, you’ll see that exactly one of them has its arms connected to its hips AND its arms connected to its ribs AND its head connected to its leg AND its head connected to its ribs. That skeleton happens to be #15. Taking the 15th letter of the puzzle’s title (SKELETONBOOGUEYMUSIC) gives the letter M. We repeated the title at the top of the first page to try to push solvers in the right direction.

Repeating this process for each verse gives the letters of the answer in order. Below are the answers for all the clues, along with the number of the skeleton and the corresponding letter that each one produces.

WORDS	SKELETON	LETTER
fARM - HIPpi fARM - RIBosome HEADlines - teLEGraph HEADlines - RIBosome	15	M
ARMy - cHEADle cHEADle - cHIPmunks cHEADle - scRIBble colLEGe - scRIBble	10	O
cARMen - LEGo HEADstone - tRIBe sHIPyard - LEGo sHIPyard - tRIBe	8	N
philhARMonic - radioHEAD philhARMonic - cRIB HIPpopotamus - alLEGory HIPpopotamus - cRIB	2	K
ARMor - caRIBou HEADshot - alLEGro arcHIPelago - alLEGro arcHIPelago - caRIBou	3	E
mARMelade - tRIBulations warHEADs - ilLEGal warHEADs - tRIBulations HIPpocratic - ilLEGal	14	Y
hARMony - alLEGiance HEADphones - wHIPlash HEADphones - tRIButary wHIPlash - alLEGiance	9	B
ARMageddon - bRIBe ARMageddon - cHIPotle gearHEAD - bRIBe cHIPotle - LEGion	16	U
ARMstrong - RIBbon HEADquarters - microcHIP HEADquarters - RIBbon microcHIP - ilLEGible	17	S

WORDS	SKELETON	LETTER
ARMs - letterHEAD ARMs - subscriBE letterHEAD - cHIPpendale cHIPpendale - bootLEG	18	I
global wARMing - LEGolas jarHEAD - horRIBLE courtsHIP - LEGolas courtsHIP - horRIBLE	8	N
phARMacy - insRIBed hot-HEADed - LEGislator hot-HEADed - inscRIBed scholarsHIP - inscRIBed	13	E
ARMada - tRIBune overHEAD - dictatorsHIP overHEAD - tRIBune dictatorsHIP - eLEGant	17	S
gARMent - caRIBbean HEADmaster - caRIBbean cHIPtunes - ilLEGitimate cHIPtunes - caRIBbean	1	S

Reading the resulting letters in order gives the answer, which is: MONKEY BUSINESS.