Teacher Answer Key

Case Study

1. NAGPRA requires federally funded institutions to inventory Native American human remains, determine cultural affiliation, and return them to affiliated tribes upon request. If the museum receives federal funding and the remains can be affiliated with a tribe — such as the Lakota — the tribe could formally request repatriation. However, proving cultural affiliation for remains from 1400 CE requires historical, cultural, and potentially genetic evidence, and the process can take years.

2. Arguments for display: museums serve an educational function, and seeing real skeletal remains helps visitors understand human history and biology in ways replicas cannot. Arguments against: displaying someone's ancestors without consent is a violation of cultural and spiritual rights, and the educational value does not outweigh the harm to descendant communities who find it offensive. Students should draw a line and defend it with reference to these competing values.

Multiple Choice

1. A

2. D

3. C

Matching

1-C, 2-E, 3-D, 4-B, 5-A

Fill-in-the-Blank

1) NAGPRA, 2) repatriation, 3) Kennewick

Short Answer (Sample Responses)

Q1: Scientists argue that ancient remains provide irreplaceable data about disease history, migration, and human prehistory that benefits all of humanity — and that very old remains often have no clear living descendants with a direct claim. Indigenous communities counter that their ancestors' remains were collected without consent in a context of colonial violence, and that their spiritual and cultural rights to their dead should not be subordinated to scientific convenience.

Q2: NAGPRA required proof of cultural affiliation, but Kennewick Man was so old (8,500 years) that the government could not initially establish a clear connection to any specific modern tribe — exposing a gap in the law for very ancient remains. The eventual resolution came through aDNA analysis in 2015 that showed the remains

were genetically more similar to modern Native Americans than any other population, leading Congress to order repatriation and the tribes to rebury him in 2017.

Q3: Accept either position if well-supported. Pro-display: skeletal remains serve genuine educational purposes and millions of visitors learn from them; many are too old to have identifiable descendants. Anti-display: the educational benefit does not justify displaying someone's ancestor without consent; respectful treatment of the dead is a near-universal cultural value, and descendant communities' objections should carry decisive weight.