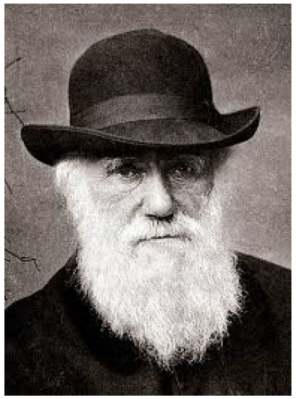
Topic	Common ancestors and shared characteristics	**Level**	GCSE (or any course for students aged 11-16)
Outcomes	• Understand that all organisms share common features such as DNA and that this is evidence that life evolved once • Understand that closely related organisms share many features in common		
Information for teachers	This activity asks students to think about shared characteristics between different organisms. It is a useful introduction to any discussion regarding the evidence for evolution. The key idea is for students to appreciate that closely related organisms share many features because they have a recent common ancestor. You could challenge students to use the information from the Venn diagram to create an evolutionary tree and justify its design.		
Pedagogy focus			
Other resources	Other resources on evolution are here: https://thescienceteacher.co.uk/evolution/		

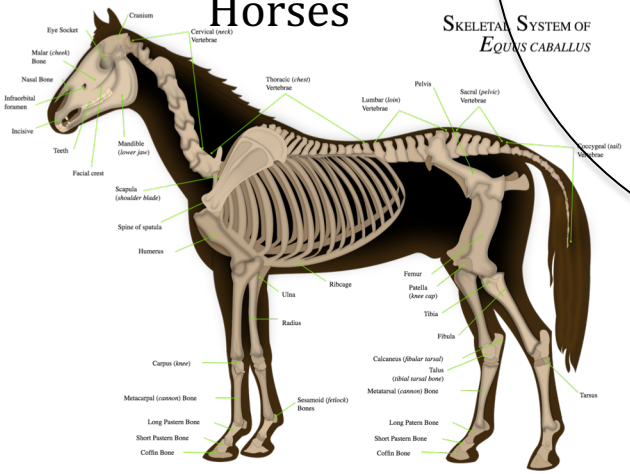


Humans

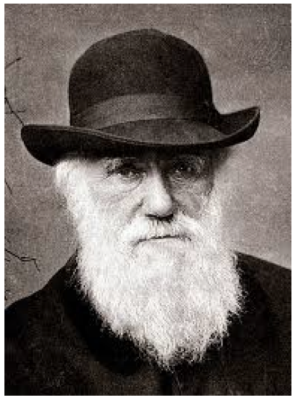
Oak trees

Walk on two legs

Horses

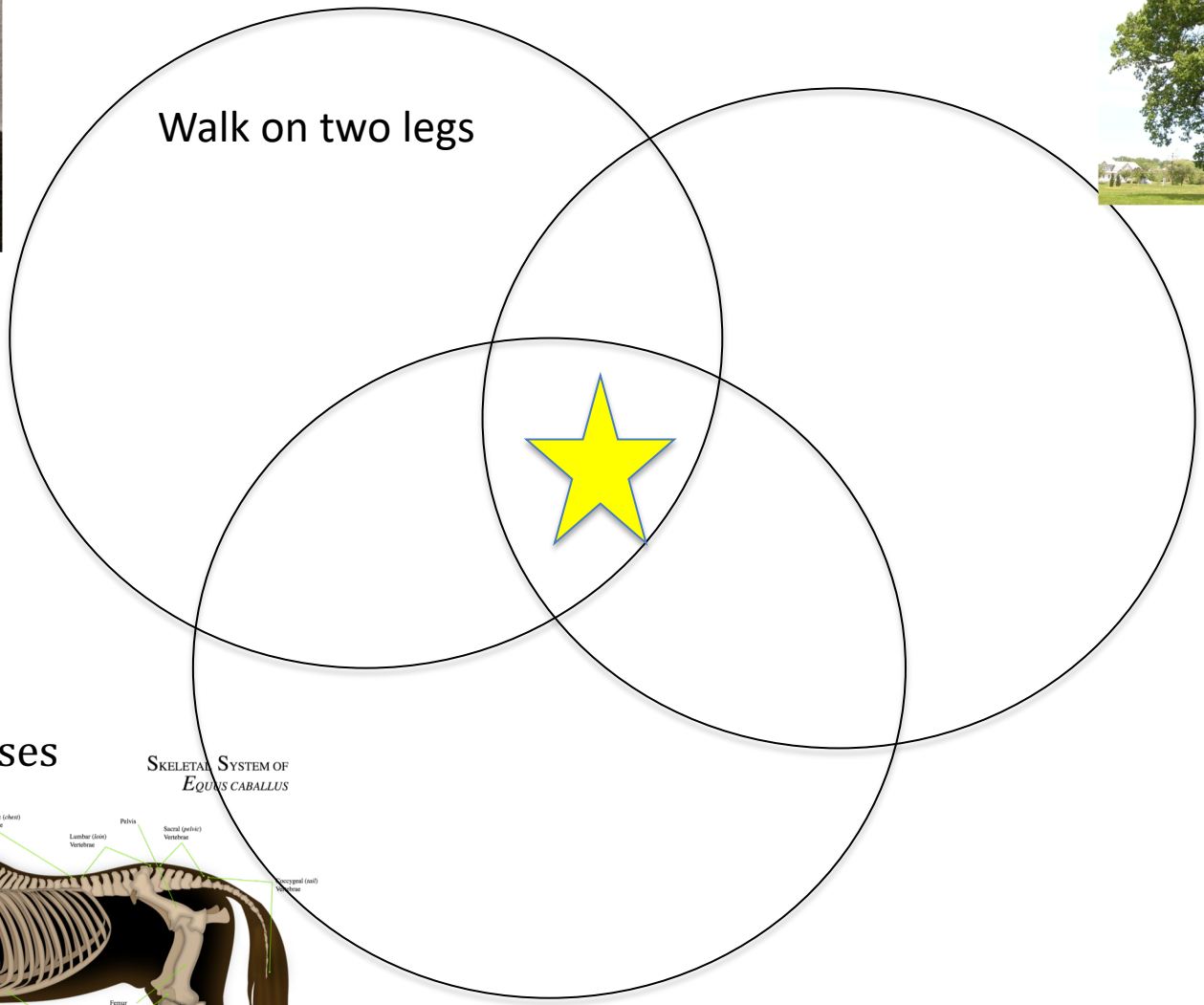


Use the Venn diagram to show all the similarities and differences between these organisms.

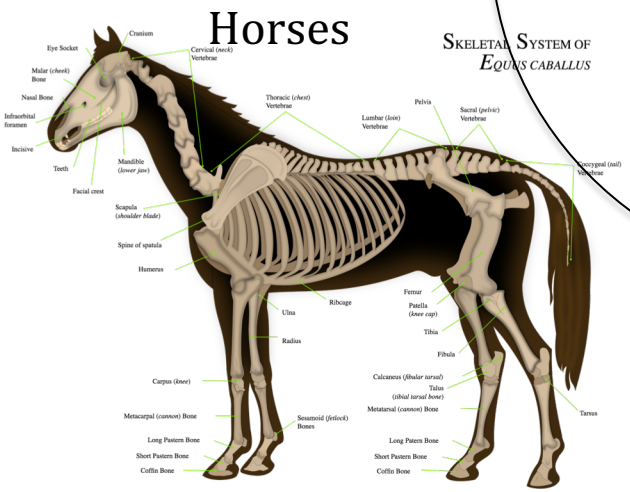


Humans

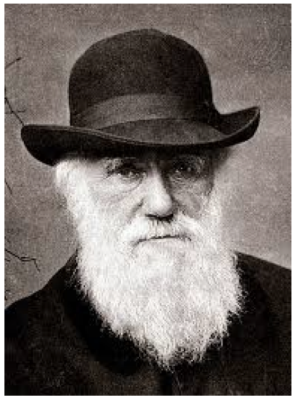
Oak trees



Horses

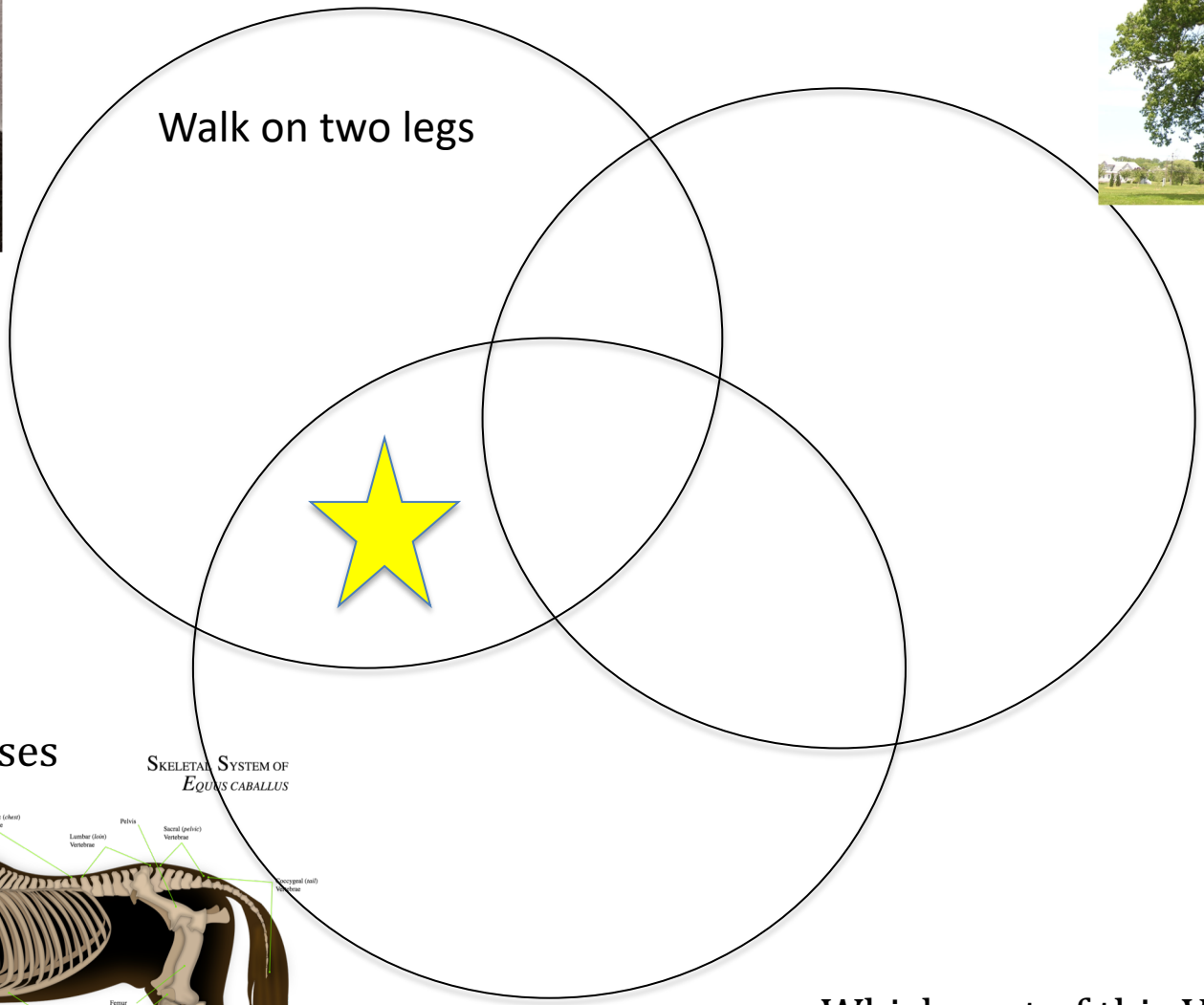


Which part of this Venn diagram provides evidence that all organisms are related?

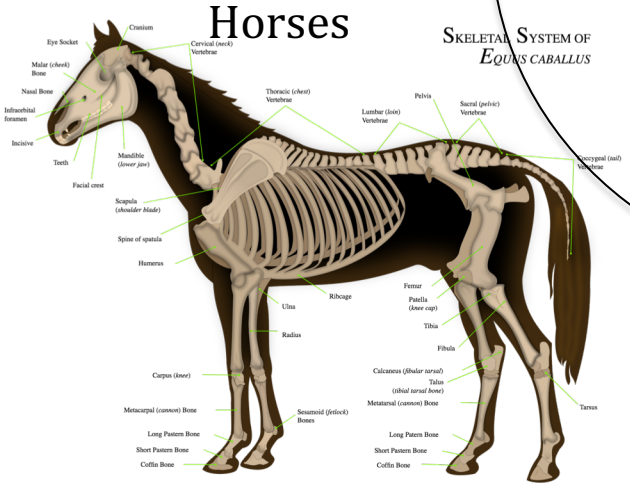


Humans

Oak trees

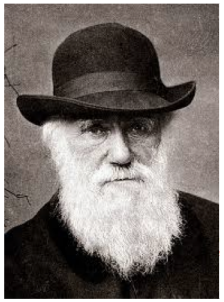


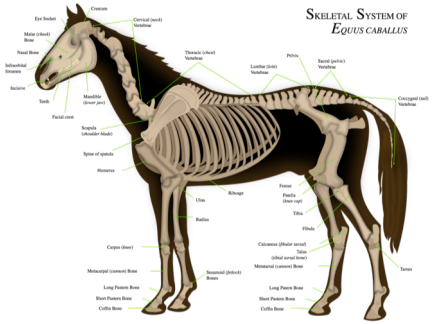
Horses

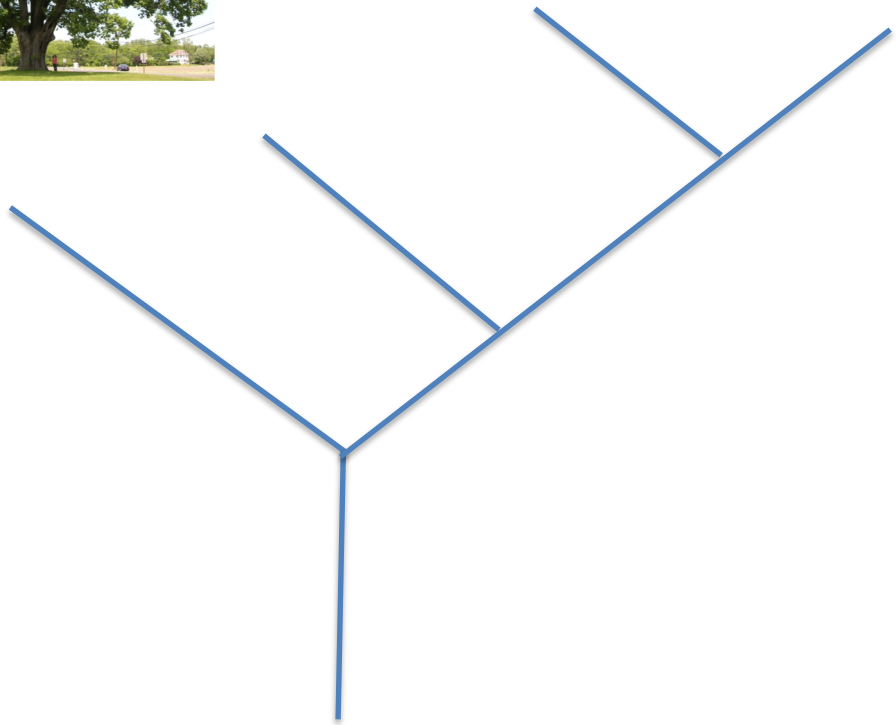


Which part of this Venn diagram provides evidence that humans are more closely related to horses than to oak trees?

Use the evolutionary tree to explain why a horse is more closely related to a human than to an oak tree.







A horse shares a common ancestor with a human more recently than it shares a **common ancestor** with an oak tree.