

1. Describe the route of blood flow, starting at the entry into the left atrium through its return to the left atrium.

Oxygenated blood enters the left atrium from the lungs, where it passes through the mitral valve (fancy name for the valve between the left atrium and ventricle) with each pump of the heart and enters the left ventricle. From there, it passes through the aortic valve into the aorta, where the blood is pumped out to the whole body. After its journey around the body, the blood returns, lacking in oxygen, to the right atrium via the superior and inferior venae cavae (superior is the upper vent, inferior is the lower). The blood passes through the tricuspid valve (the mitral valve's twin) into the right ventricle. The blood is then pumped into the lungs via the pulmonary artery, where it is oxygenated. Finally, the blood is returned to the left atrium through the pulmonary veins. (Note: Arteries carry blood away from the heart and veins return it to the heart.)

2. Define the physical borders of the mediastinum.

The mediastinum is the section of the chest that contains the heart. It is sandwiched between the right and left lungs horizontally, between the sternum in the front and the spinal column in the back, and between the clavicles (flat bone that makes up part of the shoulder girdle at the top and the diaphragm at the bottom).